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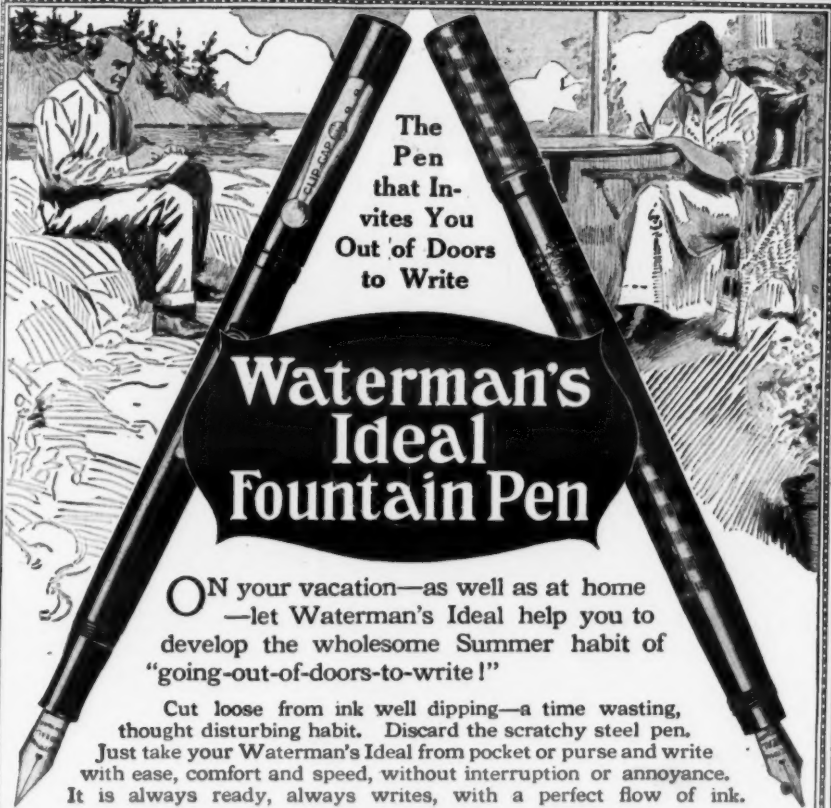
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Vol. XXXIX

JUNE, 1917

No. 5

AINSLEE'S

The Magazine That Entertains

CONTENTS

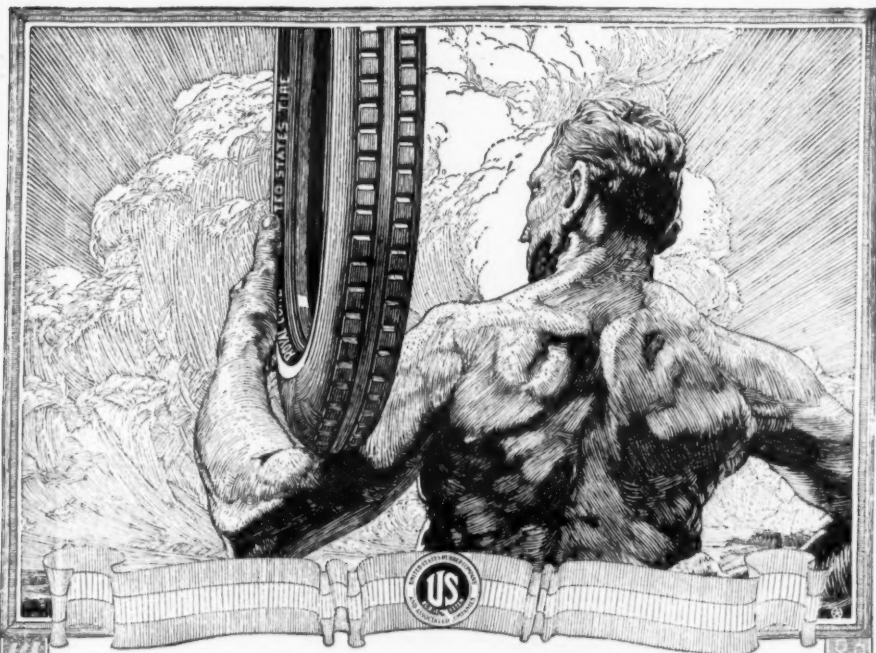
The Butterfly Man. Complete Novelette	Elmer Brown Mason . . .	1
The Longest Way Round. Short Story.	Elizabeth Newport Hepburn . . .	33
Evangelists. Verse	Theodosia Garrison	46
Love Maggy. Serial	Countess Barcynska	47
Whiter Than Snow. Short Story . . .	Justin Huntly McCarthy . . .	72
Changeling. Verse	Marguerite Moors Marshall . . .	82
Men of Mystery. Series	Albert Payson Terhune	83
The Lost Dauphin		
Just Beyond. Verse	Antoinette De Coursey Patterson . . .	89
The Patteran Short Story	William Almon Wolff	90
Her Coming. Verse	James B. Kenyon	100
The Code. Short Story	L. W. Pedrose	101
Only Birds. Verse	Martha McCulloch-Williams . . .	108
The Valley of Paradise. Short Story . .	Rip Van Dam	109
The Woman Speaks. Verse	Lyon Mearson	117
The Man Who Broke the Rule. Serial . .	May Edginton	118
Plays and Players	Alan Dale	139
Song. Verse	S. L.	143
Talks With Ainslee's Readers		144

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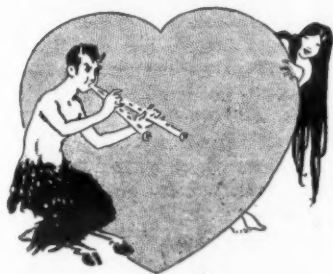
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The Butterfly Man

By Elmer Brown Mason

Author of "Gloves, Love and Monte Carlo,"
"A Wilderness Miracle," etc.

CHAPTER I.

IT'S no use," sighed Aunt Elfrieda. "I simply can't make it come out any other way!"

Marjorie leaned over her shoulder and tried to total the long column of figures. The fours were nothing more than straight lines with other straight lines across them; the sevens were also crossed, with the little hooks at the top too tiny to hold a minnow. Even to the initiated, these eccentricities raised a simple addition to the level of a guessing contest. Marjorie gave it up.

"We've been very extravagant," continued her aunt, "and I fear we are deeply in debt."

The girl sighed in her turn, and tried to make it sound resigned. She knew what was coming.

"The lodge?" she queried, speaking with totally undeceptive cheerfulness.

"I'm afraid so, Margie," Aunt Elfrieda answered in an "I-know-it-is-all-my-fault" tone.

The girl's heart went out to her. Mrs. Elfrieda Douglas, née Doring, was rather more than pretty. Her rose-leaf color deepened, for the moment, to an even more delicate pink beneath her

fair skin, and her brown eyes, open just a trifle wider than usual, had the pitiful expression of a little girl whose dearest doll has been broken. In parenthesis it might be noted that speculation as to her age was always in terms of just how young she was.

After all, thought Marjorie, while her aunt turned once more to the bewildering column of figures, there were many worse places than the lodge. It was really an ample bungalow within the borders of a virgin spruce and pine forest and on the shores of an Adirondack lake. The brooks were full of trout as bright and quick as the sunbeams that filtered down to the forest floor. From the lake stretched back miles of wooded wilderness, the property of a man who never visited it and who was reputed to have acquired a titanic fortune from his Teutonic aptitude as a brewer. Marjorie had known this wilderness from her earliest childhood and was mistress of every trail, from her own pet trout pool to the romantic spring where she had nearly become engaged to various nice college boys. Nice college boys had been outgrown, however, she told herself, not without a mental reservation of regret,

and she preferred real men. And why not? Was she not twenty and out an entire season?

Aunt Elfrieda leaned back exhausted from her last arithmetical struggle.

"Perhaps we can manage some reasonable seaside place," the girl suggested hopefully. In her heart she really hated the sea—it was too big—but she had made up her mind that it was her duty to love it.

Mrs. Douglas shook her head sadly.

"I've made all the sevens as badly as possible so as to make them look like fours," she complained, "and still the total is enormous. Even our house party will have to be a small one."

She sighed bravely, still with the guilty look in her eyes. It was too much for Marjorie. Her arms went around her aunt and, kissing each other, they indulged in a comforting cry.

One morning several weeks later, Mrs. Douglas and her niece, fresh as two flowers from their night's rest, emerged from the Pullman at a small Adirondack village. A buckboard awaited them, in charge of an old retainer, Jed Stone, who greeted them as unemotionally as if he had seen them the day before instead of a full three years ago.

The day was perfect. Robins sang and whistled in the alders; the brooks ran brimful; the orchards were in riotous bloom. Jed alone was out of tune with the day, but this was to be expected. From their earliest remembrance, his life had been one long suspicion of the stability of Mrs. Stone's affections, so that he had abandoned all active forms of labor for the task of watching over her. This distrust had gradually extended to womenkind in general, until he had come to regard them as created for menfolks' misery alone. With painfully perfunctory politeness, he inquired as to his passengers' respective healths, and asked Marjorie if "there were many a-courtin' her." In answer to her denial of a train of

suitors, he pessimistically prophesied that she would soon make some man suffer.

Marjorie picked up threads of memory at every turn of the road, weaving them all into the charming tapestry of her childhood. There was the brook where she had caught her first trout, the alders where robins used to nest, the tiny pond bordered with sedges whence the wild duck led her young out into their inheritance of a watery world, the place where irate wasps had successfully resisted a raid on their slate-colored stronghold.

Jed sadly exclaimed, "Whoa!" and Mrs. Stone, the Mirandy of hot doughnuts and strawberry shortcake, appeared on the porch of the lodge, her blue apron whipping in the breeze, ample-bosomed, apple-cheeked, cheerily fat, and greeted each of the arrivals with an honest smack, followed by pleased observations on how Marjorie had "growed," and how pert and pretty were both the Dorings.

No guests were expected for at least a week, and the two women settled down in comfort and quiet to a thorough and leisurely talking over of the past season. The sighing of the forest enveloped them; the air still held a lingering crispness from the winter that made the crackling of great logs in the open fireplace a cheering sound; and the fragrance of pine, balsam, and spruce stole over their nerves, lulling them to that peaceful lethargy which makes the world of cities seem far away and of little moment on so large and pleasant an earth.

Mrs. Douglas developed an astounding capacity for repose, quite at variance with her usual vivacity. As for Marjorie, after the first two days, the resiliency of youth asserted itself, and she fished, and fished again. Perhaps her complete and all-absorbed joy in it was purely feminine. The bright-colored flies appealed to her æsthetic sense,

and she always experienced a thrill of pleasure in throwing back the radiant little trout after they had been tenderly unhooked. The larger fish impressed her as rather too gaudily colored, verging on vulgar ostentation, and she felt no compunction at slipping them into her creel.

She soon exhausted the novelty of the near-by brooks, and, on the sixth day, with sandwiches in her femininely masculine pockets, set out for an entirely new stream. It was an arrogant brook that shouted over the pebbles, growing more and more turbulent, the small pools blacker and deeper, as the angler penetrated farther into the wilderness.

Toward noon, the girl reached a real fisherman's paradise, where the water, boiling through a restricted channel, spread from beneath a smother of foam into a narrow, twenty-foot-long pool. Carefully Marjorie cast her fly to the very edge of this foam. There was a fierce rise, and, leaning back breathlessly, she tried to hold her gloved thumb on the buzzing reel, while the tip of the arched rod buried itself in the water. Ten long, thrilling minutes she fought the fish until, the length of her forearm, it lay thrashing in a tangle of line on the bank.

"You beautiful, live thing!" the girl cried. "You shall *not* be eaten! You shall go straight back to your pretty home." And, bending, she untangled the line and tried to disengage the hook.

But arose an insurmountable difficulty. The barb was deeply embedded in the gristle of the upper jaw, and defied her best efforts. The trout flapped more feebly. Marjorie struggled futilely. Giving up the hopeless task, she looked around for a sharp-edged flint with which to sever the leader. As she picked up a stone, a voice from the sky sharply admonished her:

"Don't hit the fish with that rock!"

Marjorie dropped the flint and gazed about her in complete surprise. Then, indignant at such a misconception of her purpose, she answered crisply:

"I have no intention of hitting it. I can't unhook it, and I want to cut the leader and put it back into the water. It's my fish, anyway."

"So!" came a relieved exclamation, a maple tree began to shake, and a young man swung down from the branches, jumped the brook, disengaged the hook from the big trout's jaw, and, bending down, gently replaced it in the stream. Together they watched it float belly upward, its tail moving feebly, then, after several unsuccessful attempts, turn over and, with a sudden rush of vitality, flash out of sight beneath the dark water.

Mutually relieved, the man and the girl turned to each other. She saw a well-built young chap in knickers and a flannel shirt, the top button unfastened, hatless, with calm blue eyes, tanned skin, and very light flaxen hair. Indeed, the man was so blond as to be nearly an albino, and Marjorie caught herself looking again to be sure that his eyes were not pink. The boy saw a figure in brown leggings, stout tan boots, very short brown skirt, and a brown smock, topped by a brown tam-o'-shanter above two hazel eyes from which a small gauntleted hand was pushing back a stray lock of soft brown hair—an altogether charming vision of maidenhood, appropriately framed in the wild beauty of the forest.

"I am——" began the girl.

"You are——" said the man.

"I beg your pardon!" cried both together, and then, since they were young, happy, and, according to their caste, quite without affectation, they both laughed.

"I was about to thank you," she explained, "before we fell into that Greek-chorus mode of conversation, for coming out of your tree and saving my

fish's life. And to tell you that I am Marjorie Doring," she added as an afterthought.

"I couldn't see you from where I was," he apologized. "Only your hand with the stone in it and the glorious trout. I thought you were a wandering angler about to perpetrate a crime, not a—not a nymph."

"Very pretty," she approved, "and I'll reward you with a sandwich. After the thrilling adventure we've been through together, I'm simply famished."

"Luncheon! An excellent idea," he agreed promptly. "I'll contribute to the best of my ability, though I warn you that other people's food always appeals to me more than my own," and he sprang across the brook, picked up from beneath the maple a rather large knapsack and a butterfly net, and was again gymnastically by her side.

Marjorie spread the contents of her pockets over a clean, flat rock—three tongue sandwiches, one that held an ample layer of jelly, and a generous piece of cake. The boy tipped a collection of cyanide bottles of various sizes from his knapsack, lifted out carefully a shallow, foot-square box, and produced from beneath a package done up in a paper napkin. Open, it revealed a hunk of cheese, two very thick slices of unbuttered bread, several inches of large, round sausage, and an immense pickle. Rather diffidently, he laid these viands near the dainty sandwiches, and even went so far as to apologize for the sausage on the ground that it was very nourishing. The pickle made a direct appeal to Marjorie, however, and she ate fully half of it. Clear, cold spring water gave a zest to the feast, and healthy young appetites soon cleared the board.

"Now, would you mind telling me why you live in trees?" queried the girl, after the man had asked and obtained permission for the lighting of a somewhat disreputable pipe.

"Not at all," he answered. "I was looking for leopard moths."

"I used to play that a chipmunk was a tiger," she mused, "but not even my imagination could create a leopard out of a moth."

"I'll show you," he laughed and, tumbling something out of a cyanide bottle, he held it out to her in his hand. It was a small white moth, the wings daintily beaded at the edges with black, the centers being irregularly marked with slaty dashes. The body was wine-colored, with a single purple splotch, and the antennae jetted out from the saffron head like two tiny purple ferns.

"It's perfectly lovely!" cried Marjorie. "What a shame to kill such a beautiful thing!"

"It raises the dickens with maples and elms," the man explained. "Came over from the Old World and is spreading like mad."

"Have you other fierce animals about you—bears and lions, for instance?" she asked curiously.

For answer, he picked up the shallow box of which, in emptying his knapsack, he had been so solicitous, and raised the cover. The girl gave a little cry of pleasure. Inside, were pinned a number of brilliant butterflies and moths, light, fragile, glowing things, some with wings spread, some with them closed above their backs as if poised on a flower. It was impossible to believe that they were not still quivering with a life as vivid as their brilliant hues. Heads close together over the jewellike atoms, the man and the girl examined them, she pointing first to one and then to another, while he recited their names and briefly outlined the story of each tiny existence.

One butterfly he lingered over with especial tenderness, a little brown thing with two black spots on fore and hind wings, rather a dull nun among its brighter-colored sisters, and yet charming withal in its somber daintiness.

"The Dark Wood Nymph" he called it. Then, raising his blue eyes to her hazel ones, he added:

"It's very like you."

An innocent enough speech, in sooth, but Marjorie drew back, deeply offended. Exactly why she could not have put into words. Perhaps it was because this modest specimen had been selected for the comparison in preference to those more brilliant; perhaps it was the sudden personal twist to the conversation; perhaps the faint odor of cyanide emanating from the pinned butterflies had sickened her with its scent of death. At any rate, she was offended—with the inconsistency of youth, more offended than if she had been able to give a reason for this sudden *malaise*. Quickly she rose to her feet.

"I must be getting back," she said. "It's late. Thank you for showing me your treasures—and for the pickle."

The man rose also, sensed in a flash her mental change, and flushed crimson.

"Don't mention it," he answered automatically, bowed stiffly, and, gathering up his possessions, leaped the brook and was lost in the forest.

It was well into twilight when Marjorie reached the lodge. The walk back had been unhurried, though she had not fished, preferring her reflections.

Why could not things work out the way they did in books? Here she had been through a real adventure which should have been altogether charming, and yet it had left her with a feeling of indefinite mental discomfort. The man was "nice"—her instinct as well as her reason told her this—and the compliment had been really quite harmless, a pretty, possibly even impersonal idea that had flashed through the butterfly collector's mind and unconsciously formed itself into words on his lips. Had she been actively rude? Not exactly, but she had been a prude, a Vic-

torian prunes-and-prisms prude! Lorna Doone would never have dreamed of offense where none was meant; dear Dolly Mickleham would have turned it into a witticism; in fact, every heroine of her imagination would have made better use of the opportunity for romance than she had. And probably she would never see him again—and she wanted to. He *was* nice!

It was one of those perfect April evenings, warm with the promise of summer, vibrant with the awakening of all growing things. After dinner, during which Marjorie had been unusually silent, the two women slipped into a hammock on the porch and, rocking gently, looked out over the lake. A dainty sickle moon hung in the sky; stars stole out and were mirrored in the calm waters beneath; a fish jumped, breaking the surface into silvery rings that spread and spread until they had faded back into the level calm.

"To-morrow heaps of people arrive and we lose this delicious peace," sighed Mrs. Douglas. "It's been heavenly restful. I always thought I should be bored to death, with no one to talk to me and absolutely nothing to do. Now I envy and understand an oyster's happiness."

"I'm not at all sure that I want to see people, either," echoed Marjorie.

"Not even Tommy?" her aunt suggested, not entirely without malice.

"Least of all Tommy. The way he looks at you is positively sickening. Especially when I realize," she added frankly, "that those adoring glances were once my exclusive prerogative."

The older woman laughed and patted the girl's hand.

"I fancy you weren't wildly enamored of the boy," she volunteered. "And you'll have an opportunity to re-attach him to-morrow."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Marjorie, sitting up. "You haven't asked Tommy De Kay here already!"

"Wrote him the day we arrived. I

promised him, you know. When you reach my age, Marjorie, and a young man voluntarily kisses you good-bye in public——"

But Marjorie smothered the rest of the sentence beneath a silk pillow.

Mirandy could be heard moving about inside, and Mrs. Douglas called to her. As the woman stepped out onto the veranda, she raised her hands to her eyes with an exclamation: "Glo-ry days!" and the occupants of the hammock gave two startled feminine screams. A perfect blare of light fell upon the lodge from off the lake; not the clear-cut ray of a searchlight, but diffused, blinding. For a full minute it held them, and then swept on to illuminate the heavily wooded shores.

"Are we about to be attacked by a hostile fleet?" demanded Mrs. Douglas. "What is it, Mirandy?"

"Goodness knows! It may be a sign of heavenly grace, but I'm glad I ain't got no sins on my conscience."

"Send Jed here," Aunt Elfrieda requested. "There are no other people living on the lake. We must find out what it is. It may be some one 'jacking' for deer against the law and out of season."

The light now was much farther along, its source hidden behind a bend in the shore, the radiance, however, showing plainly on the treetops. Jed appeared promptly, stared in that direction, and nodded his head gloomily.

"Do you know what it is?" chorused the women.

"I've a good idee," he answered wisely, "a very good idee. There's a feller been hangin' round here meanin' no good. All he wants is to get me out on the lake, so he can come a-courtin' Mirandy. I know women," he concluded darkly.

"That will do, Jed. You may go," said Mrs. Douglas coldly, and the two Dorings were left alone.

"I believe he's just plain afraid,"

vouchsafed Marjorie, "and made up the whole thing so as not to be sent out on the water."

"There's nothing to be afraid of. It can't even be any one after deer. The light spreads too much. It's—it's just mysterious!"

Aunt Elfrieda looked at Marjorie—Marjorie gazed back at Aunt Elfrieda. There was no need for words.

"We had better take along plenty of sweaters," suggested the girl, as they went quietly into the lodge.

Not twenty minutes later, a canoe slipped out of the boathouse and, with both occupants paddling, turned toward the brilliant light, now over a mile away. The night was warm, the water mirror smooth, and the uncertainty as to what they might find added zest to the adventure. The radiance followed the curves in the shore and at first they gained on it steadily. Then it began to move faster. They quickened their stroke, but somehow it kept the same distance ahead. Tired now, they rested on their paddles, and, a sudden anxiety in her voice, Mrs. Douglas spoke:

"I haven't the slightest idea where the lodge is, Margie. Have you?"

"Not the remotest," answered the girl promptly, with a not unpleasant thrill of excitement. "The only thing to do is to follow the shore line till we come to the boathouse. The lake is only five miles around."

The brilliant light far ahead seemed to have become stationary, concentrated into a single shaft of radiance, and very close to, if not on, the shore. With the knowledge that they did not know where they were, the lake lost much of its charm for them. The long shadows of the mountains made distances uncertain. Once they actually ran onto the bank; once Mrs. Douglas was so sure they were near the shore that she reached for bottom with her paddle and all but upset the canoe. Marjorie developed an obsession in regard to snags,

seeing them everywhere. Every minute they became more hopelessly lost, the mysterious light, which continued to remain stationary, the only relief to the unbroken sameness of the forest. A little chilly wind whipped the lake into ripples; clouds blotted out the stars, sailed across the moon.

"I'm tired and it's growing cold," complained Aunt Elfrieda.

"Slip on another sweater and we'll rest for a while," counseled her niece.

The canoe drifted. It grew darker, while the wind rose. The air held an unmistakable threat of rain.

"Let's steer for the light, since we've nothing else to aim at," suggested Marjorie, reinvigorated by the short rest. "We'll find out what it is, anyway."

Ten minutes brisk paddling, the wind at their backs, brought them opposite the goal. The radiance appeared to come from halfway up a tree, and its shaft of light along the edge of the forest served only to bring out by contrast the darkness of the rest of the world. Marjorie, from the stern, swung the bow and drove forward with three powerful strokes. There was a vicious rip, a lurch, and the canoe settled slowly in three feet of icy water.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" gasped Mrs. Douglas. "Now we've done it! Why, why——"

But the rest of her sentence was drowned in Marjorie's peal of laughter.

"The punishment for our curiosity," she announced. "I only pray the light may be real enough to furnish a fire."

"It's all very well for you to enjoy yourself," shivered the other woman, "but I'm older than you and shall catch my death of cold."

"Serves you right for having such a scatterbrained niece," Marjorie answered heartlessly, adding as an afterthought, "And for stealing her young man."

Bedraggled, they reached a sandy

stretch of beach and looked up to the source of light above them—a square object, like a magic lantern, hanging from the limb of a hemlock. As they watched it, a great crimson moth fluttered along the path of light and dove within.

"I know what it is," cried the girl. "It's a moth trap, and I know the man who owns it. I'll call him," and with the words, it flashed over her that she did not know his name.

"For Heaven's sake, do!" begged her aunt. "Perhaps he'll make a fire for us. I'm fro-o-o-zen!"

So unexpectedly that they clung to each other in fear, a voice came out of the darkness.

"You'll find my cabin just ahead. Follow the path beneath your feet," it said. "There's a good fire burning, and meanwhile I'll see what can be done with your canoe."

"Thanks awf-u-u-ly," politely answered Mrs. Douglas between shivers; and holding tight to each other's hands in the darkness, they groped their way along the narrow path.

The rain was falling steadily before the cabin was reached, and they scuttled inside like two wet mice. It was a comfortable, twenty-foot-square room, with a cheerful blaze in the stone chimney, which they promptly piled with additional logs. By the light of the flames, the whole place was revealed, and they swiftly inventoried its contents—a cot heaped with blankets, two tables, one holding a microscope, several home-made cupboards, chairs of like manufacture, pipes everywhere, rows of tobacco jars, and, pinned to the walls, hundreds of moths and butterflies. There was one long shelf of books in dull bindings, and to it Marjorie turned, bent on finding out from the flyleaves what to call her host. Nearly all the books contained cuts of insects, half of them were printed in German, and

not one was inscribed with its owner's name.

The rain began to patter down more briskly on the roof, and the wind rose to a roar. Inside, it was very cozy and comfortable—so warm that the girl flung open the cabin door. Their clothes were drying rapidly.

Mrs. Douglas turned to her niece, a question in her eyes.

"I met him when I was fishing to-day," Marjorie volunteered. "He collects butterflies and moths, and he's nice—but rather odd."

Her aunt let the tardiness of this confession pass without comment, and went straight to the crux of the situation.

"It looks as if we'd have to spend the night here in this strange man's cabin, and I don't like it!"

As if in confirmation of her fears, a voice hailed them from the darkness outside the door.

"Your canoe is rather badly damaged, and it's too rough to cross back to the lodge in mine to-night. I fear you'll have to accept my hospitality. There's tea in the third tobacco jar from the end."

"You're very kind," called back Marjorie. "But where will you sleep?"

There was no answer. They waited several minutes, and then Mrs. Douglas closed the door.

It was well into the morning, after a night through which Aunt Elfrieda and Marjorie slept peacefully in spite of their strange surroundings, before the lake was smooth enough to make the crossing possible. Their mysterious host was not visible, but an unsigned note was pinned to the cabin door, suggesting that they take his canoe, since their own was in bad condition.

"Nice man," commented Mrs. Douglas. "He simply kept out of the way. Really unusual masculine delicacy," and she sat down at the table, found a pencil, and scribbled on the reverse of the

sheet thanks for his hospitality and a hope that he would soon drop in on them at the lodge.

"It would be decent of you to sign this, too," she suggested, "since you've met—shall I say?—the man," and she handed the note to her niece.

Marjorie added her name and then, acting on a sudden impulse, printed "D. W. N." after it. After all, it wasn't an insult to be called a Dark Wood Nymph, and, her heart further softening, she wrote a line beneath her signature:

The tea was nearly as good as the pickle.

Halfway across the lake, Mrs. Douglas gave a cry of dismay:

"I had no idea it was so late! They've actually come!"

Marjorie peered over her aunt's shoulder and saw that it was too true. The first installment of guests had arrived. Tommy De Kay's figure, inclined to rotundity, was plainly visible on the dock; the pile of luggage on the veranda could mean only the presence of the Stuyvesant twins, Helen and Elsie, and their mother; Colonel Albrice, the most persistent of Aunt Elfrieda's admirers, was inspecting a canoe; while John Bailey, the rising young corporation lawyer, was seated on the steps beside Ferdie Smythe, who combined immense wealth with an equable disposition and a passion for fishing.

"If only Jed hasn't had one of his fits of gloom over us!" moaned Mrs. Douglas. "Mirandy has better sense. If only they haven't pumped Jed and learned that we spent the entire night away from the lodge! It's not proper to sleep in a strange man's cabin, even if you only hear and never see him."

"He's not exactly a stranger," objected Marjorie. "I've seen him and talked to him. Besides——"

But the rest of her sentence was lost in Tommy's nautical hail:

"Canoe ahoy! Canoe freighted with beauty, ahoy, ahoy!"

"Ahoy yourself, faithless young man!" called Marjorie. "Can't two beauteous damsels go for a morning's paddle without being greeted on their return as if they were whales?"

"Don't say 'ahoy' to whales," explained Tommy. "It isn't etiquette. You shriek: 'There she blows!' which wouldn't be polite. I bring exciting news, though. The entire complement of officers, including the dog, of the latest interned German cruiser have escaped, and rumor hath it they are hiding in these here mountains, where they have stuck up a wireless to communicate with the Fatherland."

"You're ridiculous!" said Mrs. Douglas, as the canoe came to land. "Yes, you may kiss my hand, and then bring our sweaters and things up to the lodge."

"How about your dainty fingers, Marjorie?" he queried, helping her up the bank.

"The lips that touch aunty's shall never touch mine," she paraphrased. "You're a goose, Tommy."

"Beats drink a mile," said that irrepressible youth, as he gathered up the sweaters. "But what the devil is this?"

A portfolio had fallen from the armful of garments and burst open, spilling a neat drawing of the veins in a butterfly's wing—to the uninitiated resembling nothing so much as a mysterious skein of wires—and several maps, lettered in what might easily pass for German script.

CHAPTER II.

It was the fundamental and well-understood law of the lodge that guests should find their own entertainment. Ferdie Smythe promptly requisitioned a canoe, and was soon casting along the shores of the lake, a look of happiness on his face so placid as to be nearly

bovine in its complete contentment. Elsie Stuyvesant annexed John Bailey, loaded him with rugs, and shepherded her prey off into the woods, where she could exercise her greatest fascination on the loquacious young man—that of a perfect listener. The colonel attached himself with gentle, but firm courtesy to Mrs. Douglas. Tommy De Kay fell, perforce, to the lot of Helen Stuyvesant, after being firmly repulsed by Marjorie, who had new flies to try.

Auction started on the broad, shady veranda. Colonel Albrice was an excellent player, and Mrs. Douglas made a fair partner for him. Helen Stuyvesant had that uncanny insight into the game that women often acquire, but Tommy was too great a handicap for even her skill, and she soon broke up the session in disgust, not sparing her partner's feelings. The women disappeared to write letters. The two men, after the manner of rivals, that they might keep track of one another, went for a walk together.

Dinner was the one meal at the lodge that even approached formality, and the only meal at which every one was supposed to be present. It served as a clearing house for the day's happenings and a time to plan for further amusements. From the beginning of the evening, it was very plain that Tommy was all but bursting with something to tell, restraining himself until the others were through only for the sake of a clear field.

"Good women and moderately good men," he orated finally, "know that I, in company with a respected member of my sex whose veracity cannot be impugned, and who will uphold me in every detail of the extraordinary adventure I am about to relate, wandered bravely off into the trackless wilderness. We had penetrated into the forest along an excuse for a road a distance which I claimed was at least fourteen miles, but my warrior friend from the South

maintained was but three, when we came to a sunlit clearing. It was sprinkled with wild flowers, no macadam streets imprisoned the fruitful soil, a wisp of smoke rose from its center, and rose still higher a wondrous voice in song.

"Without hesitation, we went toward the sound of that voice," Tommy continued, "and came upon a gypsy encampment. There was the traditional red van, a crackling fire with a large iron pot over it, an old woman moving about in the background, and the gypsy queen sitting on a camp stool before a small table singing and manicuring her dainty finger tips—a black-eyed gypsy queen, with a skin as fair as dark milk. We called to her——"

"*You* called to her," hastily interjected the colonel.

"I called to her"—Tommy accepted the correction with a frown—"and in suitable terms indicated our desire to hear our fortunes. Perhaps it was the unusual character of our young and middle-aged charms"—the colonel winced—"but she seemed considerably fussed. However, she received us with great politeness and had the elder gypsy bring us camp stools. We will pass over what she told me——"

"Indeed we will not!" interrupted Colonel Albrice. "She made De Kay lay his hands flat on the table, in spite of his intimation that she would be in closer sympathy with him if she held them in her little own. He has led, according to her gypsy majesty, a useless, though not a criminal life, somewhat redeemed by the fact that he has furnished amusement to many, but the sum total of his virtues equals zero. As to his future, all she could see was a blank. He begged her to say that the influence of some good woman might make a man of him, but she asserted that it would require the influence of at least six."

"So you see," remarked Tommy, no

whit abashed, "not only you five fair ladies, but Mirandy also, will have to smile on me."

"What did she read from your hand, colonel?" asked Mrs. Stuyvesant.

"Nothing of the slightest interest, madame, I assure you."

"Only that he would marry one of the most charming women in the world and make her very happy," volunteered Tommy; and at once conscious that this revelation had not been in the very best of taste, with a hasty, "Beg pardon, colonel," he plunged ahead into narrative.

"She forestalled our crossing her palms with silver by informing me that this was a sacred day in the gypsy calendar, on which they were allowed to accept no metal coin, so we had to dig up bills. Then she asked us to tea and scones, and I had a peep into the van, the neatest, cleanest place you could imagine. We stayed just as long as we possibly could, and the gypsy queen twice quoted Bernard Shaw and once H. G. Wells. But here is the point of the entire story: The old gypsy, who seemed to be a kind of ancient lady in waiting, called her '*liebchen*!' *Liebchen* is German—even my varsity education has not deprived me of that knowledge. Mrs. Douglas, our charming hostess, brought back a lot of German maps and drawings of a wireless outfit in a canoe that she acknowledged had been borrowed! The entire corps of officers of an interned German cruiser is reported at large in the Adirondacks! Plots, mystery, and—what not all around us!" he concluded dramatically.

As is sometimes the case with the best of masculine efforts, a woman minimized the sensation by a single deadly question.

"Was the gypsy queen pretty?" Helen Stuyvesant addressed the colonel.

"A peach," grumbled Tommy.

"Very attractive," answered the Southerner, "a regular dark beauty."

"I say, why not all of us have our fortunes told to-morrow?" suggested Ferdie Smythe.

"Certainly not," firmly negated Aunt Elfrieda. "You young men are far too impressionable. We shall go on a picnic."

Aunt Elfrieda and Marjorie shared the same room, which gave them an opportunity for those putting-the-hair-to-bed confidences that, according to Kipling, are supposed to sway world destinies.

"Tommy is certainly silly about his interned German officers," began Mrs. Douglas. "It would be embarrassing to have him break out while the butterfly collector was calling. He must be German. Don't you think so?"

"I'm nervous," acknowledged her niece. "Why shouldn't he be a German officer—he's awfully well set up—plotting—oh, all kinds of things and using his collecting as an excuse to wander through the woods."

"Nonsense, Margie! You're as bad as Tommy!"

"But there may be something in Tommy's story," insisted the girl obstinately. "And isn't it odd about the gypsy woman quoting Shaw and Wells?"

"It is strange," agreed Aunt Elfrieda sleepily. "Tommy probably made that up, though. Perhaps she's the butterfly man's wife!"

"I don't see why her quoting Wells and Shaw should make her his wife," objected Marjorie crossly, but her aunt's eyes had already closed.

Across the lake, the beam of light from the moth trap played over the shores, finally to come to rest in the old hemlock. Owls with round shining eyes sped noiselessly back and forth among the dark spruce and balsam. The stars began to pale. Out from the forest stole a strange, ragged figure. A

moment it stopped to dance with its shadow and then tiptoed stealthily to the kitchen door of the lodge. Within, it purloined a ham from the ice box, picked up several loaves of bread, emptied a flour sack on the floor, and slipped this loot into it, adding, at the last moment, the kitchen clock. Out on the edge of the forest, it paused and filled its lungs, and the silence was shattered by a wild shout:

"Deutschland über alles!"

Marjorie woke abruptly from a dream in which she was eloping with the butterfly collector, with Tommy in hot pursuit at the head of a regiment of uhlans.

"Ma-a-a-rgie, wha-a-t's that?" came in trembling tones from Aunt Elfrieda's bed.

"I'm going to find out," answered the girl, already on her feet and snatching up a long raincoat.

"Wait for me. I'm afraid to be left alone. I'm coming, too," cried her aunt.

The men were already outside, variously attired. Tommy, in poutingly tight purple pajamas, brandished a stick of firewood and fairly sputtered with excitement. Colonel Albrice, chastely draped in a white counterpane, his long, drooping mustaches giving him a striking resemblance to Don Quixote, peered into the forest, a large and vicious-looking automatic in his hand; Ferdie Smythe and John Bailey carried a rifle and a shotgun respectively.

It was Mirandy, however, who first hit upon the trail, her loud "Land o' livin'!" from the kitchen drawing every one's attention, an attention that became riveted when she appeared costumed in an ample night garment of red flannel.

"All the bread and the kitchen clock is stole," she announced, "an' a sack of flour spilled on the floor. Perhaps we can track him by that."

Indeed, a trail of white showed plainly in the faintly dawning light, and

the men followed it to the edge of the forest. There it ended under the trees, and they returned to the veranda, at a loss for the next move.

"By heavens, I never hoped that one of my imaginings would actually come true, that I would have an adventure!" exclaimed Tommy. "There *are* Germans in the woods. No one can deny it!"

"Don't you reckon it was some one jokin'?" suggested the colonel, unconsciously dropping into the vernacular of his youth, and regarding the purple-clad speaker with undisguised suspicion.

"The authorities should be notified at once," insisted John Bailey. "Where is the nearest police station?"

"There's a sheriff where we leave the railroad," volunteered Mrs. Douglas. "I've seen his star. Wouldn't it be a good plan to send Jed for him?"

"Most certainly," emphatically agreed the corporation lawyer.

But it took a full hour to unearth Mirandy's husband, and then he called Mrs. Douglas aside and earnestly assured her that the disturbance was a ruse of one of his wife's admirers to get him away from the lodge. Only the threat of instant discharge sent him toward the stables, and he went grumbling, with many a backward glance at his crimson-clad spouse.

It was very late in the morning before the entire party assembled at the breakfast table, the women—save Marjorie—rather scared, and the men uncertain whether to regard the whole matter as a practical joke or to take it seriously.

Tommy stoutly maintained that it could be nothing else but the escaped German officers raiding for provisions, until finally John Bailey's judicial logic was aroused. Granted, for the sake of argument, that there were Germans in the woods, why should they advertise their presence by a wild yell after securing the desired supplies, and why, of

all things, should they make off with the kitchen clock?

Elsie Stuyvesant, whose forte was listening, not conversation, volunteered the bright suggestion that they wanted to know when to have their meals.

Mirandy, waiting on table, joined in, with true New England democracy, with the information that they'd be fooled, because it was necessary to know that clock; it gained two hours daily.

An adjournment was taken to the veranda, where the discussion between Tommy De Kay and the corporation lawyer waxed positively acrimonious. Then there was a diversion. A native drove up in a buckboard and demanded in stentorian tones if Mrs. Friedy Douglas was there. The lady in question stepped forward, and he fished into his pocket and produced a yellow envelope.

"Three dollars and one cent to pay. I forgot the book, so you don't have to sign for it," he announced graciously.

Aunt Elfrieda tore open the message and read it over rapidly. With an exclamation of dismay, she went through it again and handed it to her niece.

"Read it aloud, dear," she directed. "You'll all have to help me. I'll explain later."

Marjorie read:

"Came America collect funds suffragette hospital corps. Not finding you in New York will join you Tuesday at lodge. Worn out with patriotic work. Your cousin.

"JANE ELLINGTON."

"Jane Ellington is Lady Jane Ellington, an English relative," explained Aunt Elfrieda helplessly. "She's strong-minded. First took up temperance, then slum work, and was one of the militant suffragettes who went to jail. The last I heard, she was organizing a suffrage hospital corps, all the women to be heavily armed. To-day is Tuesday. What *shall* we do with her here?"

The picnic had, of course, been called off, and, rather talked out on the night's adventure, the dwellers at the lodge turned their attention to the day's amusements. Bridge claimed Mrs. Douglas, which naturally meant the colonel also, with the twins as opponents. Tommy begged to be allowed to retrieve himself, but was scorned, and the card players settled down to an all-forenoon tussle.

John Bailey shouldered a rifle and disappeared into the woods with some vague notion of discovering and bringing back in triumph the miscreant who had stolen the kitchen clock. Ferdie Smythe was already on the lake, and Tommy and Marjorie were, perforce, thrown together.

"If you say one word about interned German officers," she warned him at once, "I'll shriek wildly!"

"*A bas* the entire German land and sea forces," he consented, turning down his thumbs. "Would you like to hear me discourse or shall we do something? I am your slave, as always."

"You're a fickle-minded young man who knows not the truth," she chided him, not without a slight undercurrent of feeling. "I'm sure you would rather sit and gaze at Aunt Elfrieda, voiceless and enraptured, than listen to my brilliant conversation."

Tommy glanced cautiously around before replying shamelessly:

"You're wrong, Margie. I'd rather be with you than any one else in the whole world. I adore you."

"You're simply incorrigible!" she groaned. "How dare you express such sentiments, and not a proposal for—oh, months and months? You should try at least to be consistent."

"I am, I am," he objected, and added, in conversational tones, "Margie, will you marry me?" Then, as if struck with a sudden inspiration and not waiting for an answer, "I know what we'll do. Let's go fishing!"

"No, to the first; bright boy, to the second," she agreed. "I promised aunty I wouldn't go without a man. You hate to fish, so you may carry a gun and entertain me."

"Bully idea! We may meet dozens of Germ—bears," he suggested hopefully; and, quickly getting together their respective paraphernalia and raiding Mirandy's quarters for some lunch, the two youngest members of the house party headed into the forest.

Absorbed in the most fascinating of all games, the card players were well matched, and neither couple gained much advantage. Rubber followed rubber until it was well past noon, and then there was the sound of approaching wheels. Aunt Elfrieda sprang to her feet with an exclamation of dismay, and ran down the steps to greet the arrival.

Lady Jane Ellington was a very handsome woman in the neighborhood of forty. Her features were clear cut, high bred, and she had that milkmaid, pink-and-white complexion that may almost be said to distinguish Englishwomen from all members of the sex not born on the British isles. Furthermore, she was endowed with the perfect poise of her class, which is a charm in itself.

"You ducky thing!" she exclaimed, kissing both of Aunt Elfrieda's cheeks. "You don't look over twenty, and I know that you're nearly my age. How do you do it? What nice-looking people!" she continued, mounting the steps; and, as the group around the bridge table rose, "Are you all Americans, and do you 'guess' at everything? The reason I ask is that the countryman who drove me out here was sure about not one earthly thing. He claimed to be high sheriff of this county, and when I asked him if it was a responsible position, he actually wasn't certain—he 'guessed' so.

"It was really extraordinary, you know! He guessed that it wouldn't rain, that one of the horses had a stone in its shoe—and he was right there; it did—that I was a foreigner, that he wasn't afraid of anything. Really, he was most odd, one of your American characters, I fancy.

"And, Frieda, my dear, you should write the press. The authorities have been most careless. A demented man, who thinks he is heir to the German throne, has escaped into the woods hereabouts. That is how this divining sheriff happened to drive me out. He's going to look for him—says he 'guesses,' with his reputation, he can't go back without the maniac. Your country is so interesting and peaceful, my dear, after all our horrors."

And Lady Jane subsided into a chair and beamed impartially upon her auditors.

The sheriff, rather ponderous and very important, had an interview with Mrs. Douglas before being turned over to Mirandy. He briefly stated that he intended to make the lodge his headquarters until the maniac was captured; that he guessed he'd hunt him as soon as he had "et some victuals;" that he had heard there were gypsies in the woods—they were not allowed in his county; and did Mrs. Douglas guess the lady he had rid out with was all right in her upper story?

Aunt Elfrieda reassured him as to her British relative's sanity, acknowledged that she had heard of the gypsies—they seemed to be very nice ones—and recounted the events of the night. Tommy's interned German officers she did not mention. It seemed to her that the rural representative of the law already had as much on his mind as it could possibly carry.

Marjorie and Tommy followed up a small stream that was closely associated with their youth and that revived a

thousand childhood memories. It was not especially good fishing, but when it did yield trout, they were big ones. The boy whistled and sang, stalked innumerable European armies, and was happy in the companionship of the girl. Marjorie, as she made her casts and snapped back her line, was pleasantly conscious of her quondam lover's presence.

Two o'clock found them well into the wilderness at the foot of what Tommy called a "stretched near-waterfall," a quarter mile of sloping rock down which the brook slipped smoothly into a broad, shallow pool. Here it was that, at the advanced age of twelve, Marjorie had insisted on plighting her troth to the young man, then twenty, who now lay at her feet placidly munching a lettuce sandwich. She remembered the day perfectly, even to the engagement ring twined from sweet grass, and the decision, gravely arrived at, that kissing should come after, not precede marriage. Women never forget the slightest incident associated with sentiment, she told herself wisely; men were different.

"It was here," announced Tommy calmly, "that I passed the happiest day of my life. I was young then." He attempted a sigh, but a crumb caught in his throat and the effort was not a success. "I was picnicking with many beautiful maidens, and the fairest of them all pursued me." Marjorie opened her mouth to speak and then shut it again. "Yes, pursued me and wooed me. I was a handsome young pup. Do you recall the day, Miss Doring?"

"I do not," promptly answered the girl. "I could not have been there."

"How easily women forget!" he mused. "And yet you seemed to love me. In fact, you told me so. We were to build our home on this very spot—a white cottage with green blinds. I gave you a simple, but appropriate ring

—a slim gold band set with pearls as tokens of—of—”

“You twisted the ring out of sweet grass!” indignantly interrupted Marjorie. “What a wonderful imagination you have, Tommy!”

“So now you remember,” he continued, “but only to cruelly recall my poverty, my honest poverty that would not permit me to shower you with jew-els.”

“I was a ridiculous child, and I will say you were a nice playmate,” Marjorie conceded. “Do you remember how, immediately after we had planned the house, I insisted on selecting the spot where we should be buried when ‘full of years and honors?’ I simply adored that expression.”

“Yes, and you agreed, at my suggestion, that it would be a good idea to have a band come and play by our graves once a week,” he added to her reminiscence. “It was very nice of me, I think, to consent to be entombed in this wilderness—it proved the depths of my devotion. Really, I should have preferred even then to have my bones rest under the middle of Broadway. It’s a much more cheerful spot.”

“You have degenerated,” she sighed, “and—”

“And you have grown in charm and beauty,” he finished the sentence for her. “If some good woman had only taken—”

“You’re always saying that and it’s a detestable phrase,” she interrupted. “Besides, it’s insultingly indefinite. You should specify the ‘good woman,’ not spread your sentiment thinly over my entire sex.”

He rolled over on his back and looked up at her. It’s a dangerous thing to do, this looking up at a pretty girl. Perhaps a man in his lowly position subconsciously associates them even more than usual with the angels, and, anyway, the stab from above of a pair of brown eyes is unquestionably very

deadly. A butterfly lingered over Marjorie’s head. A silence, a little, tense silence, fell between them. The girl’s breathing quickened with what she saw in the man’s eyes. Of course she liked to have him admire her, love her a little bit, and her vanity had been touched by his dereliction to Aunt Elfrieda, but she was honest with herself—she did not really and truly love him.

“Margie dear—” he began softly.

“We’ll go and look upon my last resting place,” she cried, jumping to her feet and breaking the spell.

It was quite a climb up the faint ‘rail’ along the water slide, and Tommy was undeniably plump. Shortness of breath is not conducive to sentiment. Marjorie led the way to the top, turned at right angles from the stream, and stopped before a little opening in the forest backed by a mighty cliff—stopped and listened. Tommy, with a puzzled expression, slipped his watch from his pocket and held it to his ear, then shook his head.

“Let’s look,” she whispered.

“Keep back of me, then,” he answered, pitching his voice in the same key.

He brought his rifle to the ready and cautiously moved out from the shadow of the trees, the girl following.

They had not far to go. Around the corner of the cliff they both halted, open-mouthed with surprise. On a flat rock, garnished with wild flowers like an altar, sedately stood and still more sedately ticked the stolen kitchen clock. It was as incongruous as if a Broadway policeman had been suddenly transported into the wilderness, with his hand raised in that noble gesture with which the guardians of our peace check a stream of traffic.

“My sainted Aunt Maria!” gasped Tommy, and burst into a wild peal of laughter, in which Marjorie promptly joined.

"Your daring Germans have turned clock worshippers," announced the girl, after the first paroxysm had exhausted itself. "Did you *ever* see anything so comical as that?"

"Nevertheless, some one brought it here," the man asserted, suddenly turning sober. "Even were it not a dashing, bold, and fearless crew of young Prussian naval officers. It's an adventure, all right, and," tucking the complacently ticking clock under his arm, "we certainly have an unusual trophy."

The clearing held no trace of human presence save the flower-decked rock, and man and girl, with many a glance behind, went down the trail, the clock furnishing a persistent and regular diminuendo to the uneven crescendo of argument in which Tommy strove to defend his theory of bold, raiding Huns against Marjorie's more logical suggestion of a mischievous, boyish prank.

Going down is easier and quicker than going up, and a couple of hours found them close to the lodge. Suddenly Marjorie came to an abrupt standstill.

"We're absolutely devoid of the elements of common sense, Tommy!" she exclaimed. "We should have left that clock where it was, as a bait to catch the thief."

"I simply can't clamber all that way again," the man groaned. "It's getting late and this thing weighs a ton. The works must be solid lead."

"Go back half a mile, then, and put it by the side of the trail. I'll slip in at the rear and go to my room. No one will know we haven't come in together, and we'll have a fine tale for the dinner table."

As the girl left him, Tommy turned obediently. A stick snapped behind him, and he glanced nervously over his shoulder. The sky was brilliant with the crimson of the setting sun, but the trees threw long, dark shadows. After twenty minutes' walk, he came to the

trail leading to the water slide, put down the clock and rifle with a sigh of relief, and looked about him for a suitable place to leave his ticking burden. A rock above the underbrush offered a solid base, and he stepped out of the trail.

There was a quick noise behind him, his head turned, and he went down under a crashing blow beneath the jaw. Half unconscious, he vaguely realized that a rope was being bound about his arms, his legs, and, completely trussed up, he felt himself lifted from the ground.

CHAPTER III.

Late that afternoon voices summoned Mrs. Douglas to the veranda, where she found the entomologist mounting the steps.

"I come not only to pay my respects and to bring back your canoe, Mrs. Douglas," he greeted her, "but to warn you of the presence of an odd species of thief in the woods. My cabin has been entered and a strange miscellany of articles taken—white ducks, a tin pail, sausages, and some red cloth, while money lying in plain sight was left behind."

"We, too, have been mystified," she answered, as they shook hands, and she told, in as few words as possible, of the night's adventure. "We are all on tiptoe over the maniac," she concluded. "You must meet these people. Let me see——. Your name seems to have slipped me, or did I ever know it?"

A change came over the young man's face, and he answered, with something bordering on boyish defiance:

"My name is Schultz, Mrs. Douglas."

A quail of suspicion disturbed the pretty widow's mind. Of course it was ridiculous, but she could not rid herself of the thought of Tommy's absurd escaped German officers. Nevertheless, true to her breeding, no sign of this appeared on her face, and she led the

way to the bridge table, whence curious glances had been directed toward them.

"Lady Jane Ellington, Mr. Schultz; Miss Stuyvesant, Miss Elsie Stuyvesant, Mr. Schultz; Colonel Albrice, Mr. Schultz."

The man bowed with a grace that had something foreign in it, and that won Lady Jane's instant approval.

"What a nice young man!" she announced in her clear voice. "And you speak like an Englishman, too. But I haven't heard your voice, have I? Well, I guess—you see I am adopting your American idioms—that you will speak like an Englishman. I don't like your name, though. It's very *Boche*. What is your first name? I always call nice young men by their first names. I'm so old that I can, you know."

"I am not German or English," he acknowledged, apparently somewhat dazed by her flow of eloquence. "I'm distinctly and proudly American, though I've spent a great deal of time in both countries and am of German descent. My first name is Herman."

"Horrors!" shrieked Lady Jane. "That's worse than Schultz! I'll have to invent a name for you. How would 'Butterfly' do? I understand that you are interested in them."

The entomologist grinned delightedly. German forefathers had apparently not precluded an American sense of humor.

"Isn't 'Butterfly' a bit ephemeral, almost effeminate, Lady Jane?" he objected. "Wouldn't 'Moth' be more appropriate, since I have been attracted within the circle of your radiance?"

It required a distinct pause for this to be assimilated, and then she asked doubtfully:

"Isn't that rather clever?"

"I assure you, no," he denied. "Any one could do it—even a *Boche*."

Her ladyship's face cleared.

"You really are nice—quite ducky, in fact. I've heard all American men

were, and great flirts, too, with no respect for age. You shall sit out in the moonlight with me after dinner—he must stay to dinner, must he not, Frieda?—and tell me all about yourself. Young men always do, and I adore confidences."

"I should be delighted," he answered, glancing at Mrs. Douglas to receive her smiling invitation.

And then the women disappeared into the lodge to dress.

Aunt Elfrieda frowned at Tommy's vacant place at the dinner table, and glanced inquiringly at Marjorie. The girl looked distressed, but vouchsafed no explanation, and the meal swept on in a gay stream of small talk that circled around Lady Jane and the new guest, Moth, as the Englishwoman took great delight in calling him. Coffee was served on the veranda, and it was there that Mirandy approached Aunt Elfrieda and whispered to her excitedly. Aunt and niece, without disturbing the rest of the party, followed to the rear of the house, soon coming within sound of a violent discussion.

"I tell you I won't hitch up no horses at this time of night for any old fool that wears a tin star. Besides, he ain't no maniac. Leastwise, he's Mr. De Kay."

"By the sovereignty vested in me by the State of New York and this here county, I order you, Jed Stone, to hitch up a team. If you don't—dod rot ye! —I'll arrest ye for resistin' an officer. This here feller that I captured and carried for two miles is a maniac. He had the kitchen clock Mrs. Douglas said was stole. Besides, no man who wasn't crazy could have thunk of the things to call me he did on the way back."

"No, you excuse for an utter double-dashed fool!" came a furious third voice. "I've explained to you a dozen times that I was after the crazy man myself. You addle-pated, self-opinionated nut!"

Aunt Elfrieda opened the door into the kitchen and gasped at the tableau before her. Jed and the sheriff were facing each other, both red with wrath, while propped up in a chair and swathed in rope, so that he resembled an enormous and overplump cocoon, Tommy De Kay sputtered a stream of explosives and writhed in his bonds.

It took only a moment to secure the captive's release, but some difficulty to keep him from assaulting the crestfallen officer of the law with a carving knife which lay conveniently to his hand. It was quickly agreed that the whole incident should remain a secret; first, on the plea of the sheriff that he could never live it down; second, on Tommy's suggestion that he was naturally quite ridiculous enough. His aching jaw was deftly bandaged by Mirandy's clever fingers and, at Aunt Elfrieda's earnest solicitation, he quickly followed them to the front of the lodge.

"Still another attractive young man," was Lady Jane's pleased comment when Tommy was presented. "Sit down by me and tell me how you were wounded. Moth claims he has to go home—most ungallant of him!—and he doesn't believe in suffrage, the brute! Says women are charming enough without giving them all the power in the world."

"I believe women, without exception, should be queens," earnestly asserted Tommy. "Give 'em the vote—God bless 'em!—and let 'em do lots of hard work. My wound, Lady Jane, was received in the service of a beautiful maiden. Need I say more? Because I won't!"

"Your views sound creditable," answered the Englishwoman, looking slightly dazed, "so let's pass on to other things. I'm here for a rest and to be amused. You will please—er—scintillate. Love affairs interest me hugely, especially when the man has behaved badly."

"With pleasure," he assented heartily.

"I will lay my whole somber past before you, so as to make a suitable background for the brilliant present."

Mrs. Douglas and Marjorie went with the entomologist to the foot of the steps; then the older woman returned to her guests.

"Will you walk to the boathouse?" he suggested to the girl, and they fell into step together.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, warm, still, and fragrant with the breath of the woods, such a night as makes love seem a reality and not the clap-trap mechanism of story writers, invented to carry off impossible situations.

"It's lovely!" sighed Marjorie. "I envy you your paddle across that silver lake."

"It is a wonderful night," he assented, "especially for moths. I shall be prowling around after them till dawn—perhaps even capture the maniac." He laughed.

"Do be careful." She spoke unconsciously. "I'm sure he's dangerous, even if he does worship clocks."

Then, to cover this spontaneous outburst, of which she felt suddenly ashamed, she told him the story of her afternoon.

"I must catch that fellow," he remarked decidedly. "He may not be dangerous, but he might smash up all my butterfly cases while I am away. I do hope, Miss Doring, that you won't go into the woods alone!"

For a moment the same feeling of offense came over the girl that had brought her to her feet at the comparison with the Dark Wood Nymph. In the same breath, she recalled her prompt revulsion of feeling then. Surely this regard for her safety was nothing more than casual politeness. Yet there was a slight quiver in her voice as she replied:

"It's very good of you to think of

my safety, Mr. Schultz. I promise to be careful."

The man brightened at her words, formal as they were. It was evident that he had not been sure how his warning would be received.

"By the way," he hazarded, "there's an excellent trout brook on my side of the lake. I've seen regular thumpers there, though I haven't fished it myself. I thought perhaps—I mean would you care to have me show it to you day after to-morrow? Would Mrs. Douglas like to see it? Er—would—it's quite near."

This was plain audacity, Marjorie told herself. But a new brook! And unquestionably she was not the only one who suffered from embarrassment.

"Why, that would be delightful," she found herself saying. "Come about two, and I shall be ready."

From the shadows of the shore, she watched the silver ripples at the bow of his canoe as it stole across the lake. Why was it that she, a débutante of one entire season, lost her aplomb, was really embarrassed, when with this odd butterfly collector? He *was* nice, though, and she would see him again day after to-morrow. The thought was not unpleasant. A last glance after the shadowy canoe and she stepped into the path toward the house. Without a sound, two strong arms went around her, lifted her, and before she could scream, a man's lips pressed two violent kisses on her cheek.

Quickly as she had been seized, she was released. Then she did scream, full-throated, but more in rage and surprise than fear. There was the drum of running feet, and every man from the lodge was about her, anxiously demanding what had happened.

"Some one kissed me!" she cried furiously; and then, not realizing how absurd this bare statement must sound and growing angrier and angrier, she repeated it: "Some one kissed me!"

"I suppose you mean that bleached-out entomologist," suggested Tommy, indignant, but plainly exercising self-control in order not to laugh.

"It certainly was not! He was out on the lake," the girl answered. "I don't know who it was. He just grabbed me!"

The situation reached an impasse. The men wanted to laugh, so much so that they dared not look at one another, decency alone keeping them under control. In his courteous Southern voice the colonel relieved the tension.

"This is a very grave matter, Miss Doring. Suppose we return to the veranda and decide there what to do."

In silence the men followed toward the lodge and then, from behind the house, came another feminine scream.

Marjorie reached the veranda alone to find it deserted. Not for long, however. Out from the lodge streamed men and women, in their midst Lady Jane, leading her maid, a pretty, coquettish young English girl, by a firm grip around the wrist. The young woman was dissolved in tears.

"Now then tell me all about it," Lady Jane commanded, with a final shake. "And, mind, no lies! Why did you scream? What happened?"

"Somebody ki-ki-kissed me, your ladyship," sobbed the girl.

"Hoity-toity, and what a frightful thing! Have you never been kissed before?"

"It was so suddenlike, your ladyship. I was going out to meet a gentleman, and some one in white breeches stepped out of the shadow and grabbed me."

"What do you expect, meeting a man in the dark? He meant to kiss you. You intended he should. What do you mean making all this disturbance over it?"

"Beg pardon, your ladyship, but it wasn't the gentleman I expected to meet—quite another one."

"What other one?" Lady Jane de-

manded in exasperation. "How many 'gentlemen' have you in your train, after being here an entire forenoon? I warn you, Mary Shires, I have stood all I am going to. Back you go to England without a character—Lord knows you have none!—unless you can give me a good explanation for this unpardonable racket. What man was it kissed you if it wasn't the one you expected to kiss you? And how do you know it wasn't he?"

"He ki-ki-kissed quite different," sobbed the maid. "Indeed I am telling you the truth, your ladyship. He just grabbed me off my feet and kissed my cheek hard."

"Exactly what happened to me," volunteered Marjorie.

"You may go, Shires. I'll attend to you later," said Lady Jane, leaning back helplessly. "Has every one been kissed here? Is this Eden? Apparently I am the only one who has been neglected. Where is my young man?"

The pent-up mirth of the masculine contingent broke forth in a roar of merriment that would not be stilled. Tommy De Kay, scatterbrained as usual, capped the climax. Bending over the Englishwoman, he planted a kiss, as she dodged, on the point of her chin.

"Tommy!" shrieked Mrs. Douglas, scandalized. "How could you?" And there was an abrupt silence.

Lady Jane glanced about her and then rose nobly to the occasion.

"Don't mind the lad. I liked it," she announced clearly. "I'm absolutely fascinating to feeble-minded people. Before you know it, that demented man will be out of the woods at my feet."

When the evening had come to an end, Aunt Elfrieda sat by Marjorie's bed and talked and talked. The burden of her discourse was whether or not Tommy should be banished from the lodge. There would have been no hesitancy over the verdict had not Lady Jane very naively interceded for him.

"It wasn't a very terrible thing," she explained. "Only boyish. I'm sure he's a nice lad, and really, Frieda, my dear, I liked it. When a woman gets to be over forty, every kiss is a compliment. Don't send my young man away. Perhaps he'll do it again."

Mrs. Douglas yielded, of course. But now she was uncertain as to her wisdom.

"Things are much too informal here," she complained plaintively, "and too mysterious. Who could have kissed you? At least *you* didn't like it." Marjorie shuddered. "I suppose Jed kissed that horrid little maid, but I don't know. Anyway, Mirandy called her a 'piece,' won't speak to her husband, and was crying over a batch of doughnuts when I left the kitchen. With the woods full of entomologists who may be German officers, and a scattering of maniacs, I'm at my wit's end."

"I don't see why you should class that nice butterfly man with German officers and maniacs," indignantly objected Marjorie, sitting up in bed. "Maniacs!" she repeated. She hesitated, and a revelation came to her. "Maniacs! Oh, don't you see, Aunt Elfrieda? And it's horrible! It was the maniac who kissed both me and the maid. He wore white breeches, she said. Mr. Schultz's white ducks were stolen. Don't you see, and isn't it perfectly awful?"

Mrs. Douglas saw.

"I've a great mind to go straight back to New York," she wailed. "I'm plain scared. Promise me, Margie, that you'll go nowhere without all of us!"

"Or with a man, a very strong man," objected Marjorie.

"Well—perhaps," conceded her aunt. "But, oh, I am scared!" and she began to cry.

Marjorie drew her into her arms, and gradually the sobs ceased.

"You're all I have, Margie," she sighed, "and I do love you."

"All except the colonel, and Tommy, and—and heaps I don't even know about."

"Men!" sniffed Mrs. Douglas scornfully, and settled her head on her niece's warm shoulder, and both women went softly to sleep.

Outside the lodge, a fantastic figure in white trousers, bound round the waist with folds of crimson cloth, rollicked in the moonlight, chasing the shadows, peering around the trees, reaching for the light moths that fluttered like puffs of eiderdown among the branches. Pausing a breath before a white birch, ghostlike in the night, he suddenly threw both arms around its trunk and imprinted two resounding smacks on the smooth bark; then, with an aimless chuckle, trotted down a trail into the forest.

A quarter of an hour, he went forward steadily, stopped suddenly, bent listening. Tense with excitement, he stole on, hesitated, then, with a sudden spring into the underbrush, gathered something into his arms. Regular, sedate, unhurried, from it came a steady "tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock." Hugging the clock to his breast, the man gave one high, maniacal laugh and ran on between the trees.

CHAPTER IV.

In the morning, a marked inclination for one another's company manifested itself among the guests at the lodge. Of course no one was exactly afraid—at least each separate individual privately so assured herself or himself—but a forest, no matter how beautiful, that possibly harbors a desperate crew of escaped German sailors, and unquestionably shelters one maniac, loses much of its charm. The men advanced half-hearted pleas for walks or canoe ex-

cursions; the women promptly negatived them.

It began to look as if the beautiful outdoor weather would be wasted at auction or loafing on the ample veranda. However, the versatile Tommy saved the day. He suggested that the entire house party combine a picnic with a pilgrimage to the gypsy encampment.

Picnics are delightful things. There is something about the eating of food outdoors, the going into the forest to live even for so short a time, that brings back the Golden Age, when the word "prude" was yet unspoken, when prisms were only a variety of sunbeam, and when girls were wooed by feats of strength and gifts of garlands, instead of being forced to measure their lovers' devotion in terms of income.

At first it was a single jolly, basket-laden crowd, but it gradually resolved itself into units, each consisting of the proper chemical combination of one molecule of man to one of maid. Stragglers developed; the more energetic surged ahead.

Like the majority of her countrywomen an excellent pedestrian, Lady Jane was quickly far in advance of the column, but was soon joined by Marjorie and Tommy. That youth, far from sure of his welcome and looking, for him, a trifle forlorn, had shamelessly thrown himself on the girl's mercy, and she, with the weakness a woman always shows for a former lover, had agreed to see him through.

It was not a difficult task, however. The Englishwoman was in excellent humor, besides being naturally kind-hearted, and she greeted him amiably from afar.

"Well, infant Don Juan," she called, "do you feel chastened by the general horror caused by your kissing of the end of your grandmother's chin?"

"I believe I do," he conceded. "You were awfully white about it, Lady Jane."

"You should practice," she continued, accepting his words with a nod. "No woman likes to be kissed awkwardly. It's a poor compliment. Well do I remember, when I was nothing but a chit of a schoolgirl, how a man's stupidity turned my love into positive hate. He was my music teacher—all healthy, normal girls fall in love with their music teachers—and one day he promised to bring me something that I wasn't to show to any one. I thought it was a ring, of course, and even looked forward to an elopement. He brought me a box of salt-water taffy his mother had made for him. I hated the man, though I'll concede the sweets delicious. Now if he had only kissed me——"

"I don't see how that bears directly on my case," said Tommy. "Unless you mean that I may hope."

"Hope for what?" Lady Jane demanded. "Do tell me if you are trying to make love to me again!"

"Why, an elopement, of course," Tommy vouchsafed daringly.

"Don't mind me," advised Marjorie pleasantly. "Accept him and take him away. He's a nuisance about the premises."

Lady Jane was suddenly rather flustered. Tommy opened his mouth to speak, but a warning glance from Marjorie silenced him. The girl considered that that particular line of persiflage had gone far enough.

Came a diversion. As they rounded an abrupt bend in the old lumber road, a man dodged quickly into the woods. Both women gave a startled cry, and Tommy, dropping the basket he was carrying, bravely roared:

"Come out of there or I'll shoot!" at the same time pointing a bottle of stuffed olives into the underbrush.

"There ain't no excuse to make such a row about it, Mr. De Kay," spoke an injured voice, and the sheriff stepped out from behind the trees.

"My sainted Aunt Maria!" exclaimed

Tommy, and they all stared in amazement.

Indeed there was cause. One of his eyes was completely closed; the other was rimmed with black, verging into cherry green, like the mucky edges of a mud puddle. His coat was ripped down the back, the collar torn from his shirt—in fact, in the entire annals of rural sherifffdom, there had never been so disreputable an object.

A beatific grin on his face, Tommy softly questioned:

"Been making love to a playful bear?"

"I suffered in the exercisin' of my duty," angrily answered the man. "I thought I had found that crazy feller, only I stumbled on a crazier."

"Let's hear!" begged Marjorie.

"'Tain't nothing to tell. I seen a feller in the woods runnin' around suspicious like, and I follered him. He kept catchin' flies in a net, tearin' open stumps, and pickin' out the worms. I ain't never seen anything crazier. Then, by a spring back there, he strung up a wire and hung something on it, and just beneath he piled up some food he took outen his bag. I jumped him and—and—and——"

"And what, my good man?" impatiently urged Lady Jane.

"And—and he whopped me. He ain't crazy, either—leastways not the crazy man I'm lookin' for. He cussed me out just like any ordinary person would."

"He did whop you, didn't he?" repeated Tommy with gusto.

"Yes, sir, he done it," the man acknowledged. Then pleadingly, "If there ain't no reason why you should talk about it, I'd be much obliged if you wouldn't. I'd be plumb scared to stand for election again if all this got out. The folks would just laugh me outer it."

The voices of the rest of the party sounded from behind the bend in the

road, and the disheveled and disgruntled sheriff dove into the woods.

"Of course it was the entomologist," chuckled Tommy, "and he's one regulah fellah besides being some husk. I am adequately r-r-revenged."

"Moth, of course," agreed Lady Jane. "But what do you suppose he was doing with piles of food and wires on which he hung things?"

Instant suspicion darted through Marjorie's mind, 'to find its way into words on Tommy's lips.

"Aha! It was his canoe you and your aunt borrowed! The one that had a drawing of a wireless outfit in it; also some German maps! Now we find the owner putting up the wires so as to telegraph to his associates!"

"Horror!" shrieked Lady Jane. "Can't I ever get away from those awful Germans! They're probably plotting to blow up all your munition plants that furnish us shells, using this wilderness to manufacture infernal machines for the purpose."

"And the entire crew of an interned cruiser lost in the woods!" chimed in Tommy.

"How perfectly absurd!" cried Marjorie, addressing the man through motives of politeness, though she certainly intended her remarks to apply also to the Englishwoman. "How could a gentleman be mixed up in such a thing? You're only guessing at the whereabouts of those sailors, anyway."

"If he's your young man, it's quite right for you to defend him. I'd do likewise under the same circumstances," announced Lady Jane teasingly. "But you must admit, my dear, that his name is very much against him. There probably is something in what Mr. De Kay says."

"I know there isn't," answered Marjorie, conscious that she was about to lose her temper and wondering why. Then, as a final argument, "Why, I'm going fishing with him to-morrow!"

They doubled another turn in the road, and Tommy halted.

"I don't think Mr. Schultz needs or deserves your support, Marjorie," he remarked dryly.

Before them, in a small open glade, stood the red gypsy van, a perfect grenadier of a maid standing on the steps looking down on a very pretty girl who was weeping bitterly, her head on the entomologist's shoulder.

"There, there, my dear," he said, patting her on the back. "Don't worry. It's much safer in the woods and I'll keep a close watch."

The woman dried her eyes and looked up at him lovingly.

"I trust you absolutely, Herman," she sighed, "and I must believe it is the right thing to do. Oh, but I wish those people hadn't come to the lodge! It makes everything twice as dangerous."

"Don't worry," he repeated, "and be sure to put the food in different places. Some one else might find it, otherwise, and take it all at once. I must be off, now." And, tilting up the girl's chin, he kissed her on the lips and walked rapidly away.

Poor Marjorie! The man she had just been defending had, within her hearing, convicted himself by his own words, and—greater crime, the only one a woman cannot forgive—her own eyes had beheld him with another woman in his arms.

"I say, let's wait for the rest of them," whispered Tommy, who was by way of being "a regulah fellah" himself.

"Kissing seems to have become an epidemic in this section," remarked Lady Jane. "I believe I'll try a little myself." And thereby disguising real kindness and sympathy beneath a few light words, she pressed her lips to Marjorie's cheek.

The gypsy queen—who, it was quite apparent, was no gypsy at all—received her guests with perfect aplomb, though

there were traces of tears on her cheeks, and seemed bent on keeping to her self-assigned rôle. She told fortune after fortune cleverly and with some wit, and, rather to her auditors' embarrassment, insisted on collecting a dollar for each of her prophecies. However, when the little pile of bills that had quickly accumulated before her blew away in the wind, it did not seem to cause her the least concern. Her amazon of a maid retrieved them without a single interested glance from her mistress.

"You're really perfectly splendid," announced Mrs. Douglas finally, after she had been assured that a most desirable husband would soon offer himself, "and I do hope you'll give up gypsying long enough to come and dine with us at the lodge. Would to-morrow be convenient for you?"

The girl flushed unhappily.

"Really, Mrs. Douglas, you're very kind. I—I——"

But she was saved the embarrassment of a refusal. From where the picnic baskets were piled on the edge of the little glade, came the scream of Lady Jane's maid and what sounded like an oath from Jed, and a mad figure, its arms full of food, rushed toward the amazed group near the red van.

It was one mass of rags; long hair whipped about its face, completely concealing the features; and, in contrast to the rest of its tatters, its legs were incased in spotless white ducks.

"The maniac!" shouted Tommy. "Catch him, catch him!" and he sprang forward.

The would-be gypsy girl forestalled him, however. With a quick rush, she was between the man and the odd figure and, holding out her arms as a protecting barrier, she cried:

"Don't touch him! Oh, I beg of you, don't try to catch him!"

One moment and it was all over. With a high-pitched, eerie laugh that

sent unpleasant shivers up and down many a spine, the madman dodged into the forest. The girl stood white and trembling, looking after him, and the assembled guests caught their respective breaths.

It was then that Lady Jane proved herself a complete trump. Turning to the others, she said quietly:

"This is not our affair. Suppose you all go away into the woods." And then, advancing, she took the white-faced girl in her arms.

The picnic, well away from the glade, was scarcely hilarious, though there was a continual hum of interested voices. It was a real mystery, an inexplicable tragedy, that had projected itself into the lives of these light-hearted, happy people, to whom the word "tragedy" meant only a mask worn by actors on the stage. Lady Jane had no additional light to throw on the matter. She had simply quieted the girl without asking any questions, and then turned her over to the amazonian attendant. Tommy, whose voice generally provided the dynamic force to keep every conversation moving, was unusually silent. Marjorie did not speak at all.

When the woodland meal came to an end and the picnickers turned homeward, Lady Jane detained Tommy and Marjorie, letting the others draw ahead.

"My dear"—she addressed the girl—"lead us to the spring the sheriff mentioned. Perhaps we may find something there to help us understand."

"Do you think it wise to go farther into the matter?" suggested the man. "If that Schultz fellow is taking advantage of our fool neutrality——"

"I'm perfectly sure that it will all explain itself," positively stated the Englishwoman, "and, furthermore, that we shall find something very nice behind it all. You see, I never make mistakes in my judgment of people."

In silence, Marjorie led the way to

the spring. The ground around it was torn up by the struggle between the entomologist and the sheriff; sandwiches and fruit were neatly piled between two trees; and, hanging low from the wire that connected them, swung a large German flag.

"I give up," announced Lady Jane helplessly. "Maniacs, plots, and kisses have turned my poor old head. And yet I *know* that Moth man is nice. My feminine instinct simply shrieks it at me."

"He seems all right," admitted Tommy, loath to abandon his fanciful fabric of plot, but in his heart not really believing in it. "Has a lot to explain, though. What do you think, Marjorie?"

"I believe everything bad of him," the girl answered bitterly, "and I certainly shan't go fishing with him tomorrow. I even believe what Aunt Elfrieda guessed—that that horrid gypsy woman is his wife."

"I don't see how that counts against him," said Tommy, plainly mystified. "Rather think it would be in his favor, after what we saw."

The Englishwoman gave him that glance with which her sex expresses its complete contempt for masculine lack of perception, and turned to the girl.

"I do hope you will go with him, Marjorie," she begged. "He might give you just the hint that would be the solution to all this mystery—might even tell you all about it. Besides, do you think it quite the sporting thing to condemn him without giving him a chance to clear himself? I don't put much weight on his kissing that weeping girl. Men always kiss women when they cry. At least they always have me," she added ingenuously.

"Let's take along the flag for a souvenir," suggested Tommy.

"No," said Lady Jane. "It doesn't belong to us, and we British have good cause for hating it."

"All the more reason—" he began.

"No," she commanded imperatively, and led the way back to the road.

However, before they were out of sight of the spring, turning, she stuck out her tongue at the blandly waving piece of bunting—the most vicious thing a great lady could do under the circumstances.

CHAPTER V.

The rain was pouring down the next morning so as to make even the veranda uninhabitable. The bridge table was moved inside, and those who did not play gathered around the great open fire. The happenings of the day before furnished a fertile and inexhaustible subject of conversation, one that would have been even more absorbing had the entomologist's part in it been generally known. Many wild theories were advanced in regard to the pretended gypsy, but no real conclusion was reached. It is to be remarked, as a strong argument in favor of universal suffrage, that the men were hopelessly biased in favor of the pretty girl, while the women held to a much more middle course.

Lady Jane, Marjorie, and Tommy, withdrawn from the group around the fire, discussed the matter in the light of their additional knowledge. The Englishwoman was absolutely firm in her belief that, in some unexplained manner, everything would turn out very much to the credit of her Moth—prove him even duckier than she had at first thought him. She poooh-pooohed the idea of a German plot; were they not too busy at home? As for the gypsy, she stoutly maintained that the man would have been a boulder had he not, under the circumstances, kissed her.

The whole basis for the discussion was, of course, whether Marjorie should trust herself with the entomolo-

gist that afternoon, in order to give him a chance to explain, or, at least, to endeavor to learn what she could from him. Lady Jane urged her strongly; Tommy fought against it; the girl could not get in a word. The man all but lost his temper; the Englishwoman became more and more insistent; and they were both beginning to quarrel like two children. Marjorie had just made up her mind to a positive statement that she would *not* go when Mirandy bustled excitedly into the room.

"Miss and Mr. Schultz to see Mrs. Douglas," she announced, "and she is right sick."

Aunt Elfrieda left the bridge table at once and, summoning her niece with a glance, hurried into the reception room.

The entomologist rose as the two Dorings entered, but the gypsy girl—for it was indeed the gypsy girl who accompanied him—kept her position half lying, half sitting in a chair, behind which loomed up her enormous maid.

"It's an imposition—— Very peculiar—— I think my sister has caught some kind of a fever—— This was the nearest place to bring her."

But Mrs. Douglas, not waiting to hear more, flew straight to the girl.

"You poor, pretty thing!" she cried, taking hold of both the girl's hands. "You must get to bed at once. Marjorie, send Mirandy here, and tell Jed to fly to the village for a doctor. You poor, pretty thing! You poor, pretty thing!"

The doctor reported Miss Schultz suffering from nothing worse than a chill, slightly complicated with a little fever, and before he left, she was sleeping quietly.

It was then that Mrs. Douglas, who had not left the suffering girl for a moment until that time, had a romantic tale indeed to unfold to Lady Jane,

Marjorie, and Tommy—a tale of love and misfortune worthy of the Middle Ages. And she told it extremely well. Lacking her charm in narrative, let us epitomize it:

Gertrude Schultz, sister of the entomologist, had come to the woods without her brother's knowledge, accompanied by a single competent attendant. The man to whom she was engaged had met with an accident that had resulted in the loss of his reason and in the strange hallucination that he was the Crown Prince of Germany and the object of relentless persecution. Confined in an asylum, he had escaped into the woods and the sheriff had been put on his trail. His sweetheart had followed, hoping to lead him back by gentler methods. In the woods, she had met her brother and they had decided between them that the unfortunate maniac was much better off outdoors than between walls—especially since he had always been very fond of the woods—and they had agreed to place food in various places throughout the forest, indicating its presence by German flags, of which the girl had laid in a supply.

"Did you ever hear anything stranger or more pitiful?" concluded Aunt Elfrieda. "Just suppose—though I absolutely refuse to do so—that the poor man never gets well! What an awful burden that nice brother and sister will have to bear!"

Lady Jane was crying, quite without shame.

"I just l-o-v-e l-o-o-o-v-e," she sobbed. "I'd do what she is doing in a minute."

"Wish I were as crazy as a loon," volunteered Tommy.

But for once he missed his effect.

"You are," answered Lady Jane and Marjorie in chorus.

By noon the next day the invalid was so far recovered that she timidly suggested going back to her van. Mrs.

Douglas, however, absolutely refused to hear of it, at least for the present.

All the dwellers at the lodge had been admitted into the secret of the demented man's identity, and, aside from the universal sympathy, the most marked change in their feelings appeared to be that, knowing who he was, they ceased to fear him, a phenomenon easily explained by the fact that it is just as hard to believe that Neighbor John Smith could commit a murder as that he could become president.

Marjorie and the entomologist were halfway across the lake, his stroke timing with the dip of her paddle in the bow. The rain was over and it was a beautiful day, an ideal day—sunlight, a young breeze dimpling the water just enough to set the golden motes a-dancing—and the girl was unaccountably happy. The canoe grated on the sand, and Marjorie sprang out and turned to her companion. How splendidly strong and broad he was, his skin tanned brown, his uncovered flaxen hair ruffled by the breeze, the frail butterfly net in his hand an absurdly fragile thing in contrast to its virile owner! They gazed at each other, smiling, and he drew a deep, long breath. She felt the blood flooding to her cheeks and turned quickly away.

"Lead on, prophet of Sir Izaak Walton," she commanded. "I'm anxious to prove whether your 'thumpers' are merely the fish you read about in books, or those you *sometimes* find in brooks."

"I know trout are there," he maintained stoutly. "I've contended with them for millers in the evening, and they jump and fall like whales."

"As large as the fish you rescued from me?" she queried.

"Larger," he asserted, "and lots of them. I saw one suck down a Luna moth, broad as my two hands, the other night, and it disappeared at one gulp."

"Where did you learn so much about

butterflies, and how did you become interested in them?"

"I studied biology in Germany, then specialized on the Lepidoptera—thereby entering into an inheritance of quarrels," he added whimsically. "Every one who takes up entomology instantly develops contrary opinions to those who have gone before. I fought with a dear, irascible old scientist anent the migration of emperor butterflies, and, to prove my point, have been coming to these woods—my father owned miles and miles of them—for the last two years."

"Do you go on, day after day, with your heart full of hate, set only on putting that nice, cross old man in the wrong?"

"Hardly," he laughed. "There's something new to see and to learn every minute——" Breaking off abruptly, he made a quick sweep with his net—another. A black-and-yellow atom zig-zagged away from him and floated off under the trees, lighting, far off, on a swaying mullein stalk. Crouched low and stealing forward like a stalking Indian, the entomologist brought his net down over it.

"Got him!" he cried exultingly, and slipped a cyanide bottle from his pocket.

A tortoise-shell—Compton's tortoise—he named the butterfly. Its ragged-margined wings were orange touched with pink and splotted with black, and proclaimed it rare indeed, the first of the species he had ever taken.

"You've brought me luck, Dark Wood Nym—er—Miss Doring!" he exclaimed joyously. "I doubt if I ever find another!"

"Pooh!" she cried contemptuously, secretly as pleased as he. "I'm sure I could catch a dozen. Have you another net?"

"I shall have in ten minutes," he promised. "My cabin is only that far away. The brook is just behind the willows. This butterfly breeds in wil-

lows. You fish until I get back," and, without waiting for an answer, he was off through the trees with a long, boyish bound.

Marjorie landed one trout while she was waiting—a "thumper;" it must have scaled closed to a pound. But it was the last fish she took that day. With the net he had brought her in her hand, she put up another tortoiseshell not five feet away and he captured it. Then one came to a reckless sweep of her own net. It was a red-letter day to the fortunate entomologist. As sometimes happens, a colony of the rare insects were about the willow patch. Twelve in all, and nearly every one a perfect specimen, they took, and the man was radiant.

Creel and rod forgotten, Marjorie wandered through the woods absorbed in this new and charming hunting. Swallowtails, blues, nymphs, silver spots, were taken and gloated over before being consigned to their mercifully quick death in the fumes of cyanide. The girl learned that it was not as easy as it appeared to sweep the pretty, gossamer-winged creatures into her net; that many more were lost by overhaste than by overcaution; that stealth and careful watching brought the greatest rewards.

Well into the afternoon they pushed through a fringe of alders and came to a yard-wide muddy pool. And its edges were alive with yellow butterflies, motionless on the ground with wings closed above their backs, fluttering in the air, poised ready to light. There were hundreds upon hundreds of the beautiful things.

"Look, look!" the girl whispered excitedly. "How lovely, how perfectly lovely! And millions of them! Are they rare? How can we catch them all?"

As she glanced up at him, his eyes were upon her, full of the light of amusement and more—the tenderness

that all strong males feel for the charming young weaker beings.

"They're not rare," he answered. "I used to call them 'puddle butterflies' when I was a boy. 'Common sulphurs' the books name them, but I prefer to think of them as 'clover butterflies,' from the place where they breed."

"I'm sorry," she pouted. "I thought I had stumbled upon a treasure."

"I love them better than any butterflies I know," he said earnestly. He wet a finger at his lips, held it down among the swarm, and raised it to her with a butterfly poised on the tip. "Did you ever see anything daintier? The touch of coral on the under edges of the wings, the coral legs, the deep green, absurdly popping eyes, the saffron antennae shading into brown——"

Pausing, he raised his head, stood listening.

"There's some one in the woods," he whispered, "and there should be no one on this side of the lake. Don't be alarmed, but it might be our maniac. I can handle fifty maniacs if necessary. We'll steal back and get your rod. Then, when you are safe on the lake, I'll investigate."

Well away from the shore in the canoe, Marjorie felt rather lonely, a little afraid, and very tired. Chasing butterflies covers more ground than one realizes at the time, she reflected.

It was not long, however, before the entomologist stood on the shore and shook his head cheerfully.

"The maniac has flown," he called to her. "I say 'flown' advisedly, because I don't see how he got away otherwise, since the poor fellow is material enough to leave footprints."

They paddled back across the lake in silence, but, from the boathouse steps, she held out her hand to him.

"I can't remember a more interesting and delightful day," she said, "and I've quite forgiven you for comparing me to a dull Dark Wood Nymph."

The man flushed with pleasure, his face alight as he looked up at her.

"May I come soon again and take you a-hunting?"

"Come very soon," she answered sincerely.

CHAPTER VI.

Two uneventful, happy weeks slipped by, uneventful only in that no one incident stood out above the daily happenings. The entomologist's sister returned to her red van, and food left in the wilderness disappeared, though the maniac was never seen. Marjorie spent many an afternoon butterfly hunting with the entomologist and was unconsciously beginning to assimilate scientific names and to try to classify her captures. Also, when she went fishing, the flaxen-haired, bareheaded, rather painfully diffident young man was apt to turn up somewhere along the brook. He called her "Dark Wood Nymph," now, unproved, and she had gradually learned a great deal about him.

From what he let slip, she had fathomed his private, secret sorrow—every thoroughly happy young man has a secret sorrow. It was in regard to his name. Ultrasensitive as he was, its intense Teutonicism had been the cause of real embarrassment to him in England, where he had happened to be at the outbreak of the war. She tried saying it over to herself beneath her breath—"Herman Schultz, Herman, Herman"—and whispered it into favor without the slightest difficulty, finally deciding that it was a perfectly good name.

Mrs. Douglas, who was not without a certain worldliness, secretly investigated and found him in every respect a worthy youth, with an income so ostentatiously large that it was easy to lose sight of its source—the breweries of the late Honorable Adolph Schultz.

Lady Jane, who took a direct view

of everything, called the entomologist a "bleached Adonis," and daily threatened Tommy with a transfer of her affections to him. That plump youth invariably replied:

"Let me have men around me who are fat, First Chronicles, chap. two, thirty-sixth verse."

Mirandy privately looked up this reference in her Bible. The verse read: "And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad." It mystified her that Mr. De Kay should have made such a mistake, but she finally decided that there might be some subtle meaning in it she could not fathom, and did not try to set him right.

Only two days intervened before the Stuyvesants were to move on to the Berkshires for another house party and John Bailey to return to his law practice. A picnic was planned as a final send off, and Colonel Albrice rather cleverly took advantage of this to lure Mrs. Douglas from the bridge table out onto the lake. He could not help but feel that his suit had not made the headway one might expect from proximity and romantic surroundings. Under pretext of selecting the very best place for picnicking, he skirted the shore in a canoe, with the pretty widow propped up with cushions amidships.

Then, while the sunbeams danced in delight about them, and the ripples laughed at the bow, he made his plea with all the eloquence that was his Southern heritage, but in vain. Unhappy, shaken, Aunt Elfrieda made no attempt to conceal her feelings toward him, but, nevertheless, was firm that she would not leave her niece, would never herself think of marriage until the girl had found and was happy with her own mate. For some time he gently insisted, but she was not to be moved. Then, fine, old-fashioned gentleman that he was, he importuned her no longer; thereby winning, though he did not know it then, the cause he counted lost.

Quite at the other end of the lake, a sandy stretch of beach attracted Mrs. Douglas, and the canoe came to shore for closer investigation. It was rather a charming spot—great hemlocks towering above and beneath them a very small and self-important brook babbling pompously. Aunt Elfrieda remembered that there was a cave in the jumble of cliffs back from the water, and thither they turned their steps along a faint trail.

Great trees, like great moments, inspire silence rather than words. The needle-strewn floor of the forest silenced their footsteps, and they did not speak. Suddenly there was a crash above them, branches snapped, and an indistinct white mass fell through the air, striking the ground with a crack as sharp as that of a rifle, nearly at the pretty widow's feet. With a cry of terror, she sprang back into the colonel's arms, and as if by magic, an automatic gleamed in his hand. Limp on the trail, a deep cut on his forehead, from which the blood oozed, lay a young man; a young man unquestionably, though his hair was pure white, his face haggard and deeply lined, and great hollows showed beneath his closed eyes. His feet were bare and scarred by the forest briars. The white duck trousers and soft, coarse shirt he wore were spotlessly clean, but limp with many washings. An altogether pitiful and helpless figure he was as he sprawled at their feet.

"The maniac!" exclaimed Colonel Albrice.

"Poor, poor thing! He's awfully hurt, and only a boy!" cried Aunt Elfrieda, tears in her voice, already kneeling by his side and striving to check the flow of blood. "Get me some water and give me your handkerchief. What shall I say to that girl?"

The colonel was quickly back, and together they washed the wound and bound it up. The boy scarcely breathed,

and his pulse was only a flutter. Under Mrs. Douglas' direction, the Southerner picked him up in his arms and carried him the few steps to the cave. Hastily they surveyed their surroundings—the now historic kitchen clock ticking on a flat rock spread with flowers; several sausages hanging from the roof of the cave; wild strawberries piled upon a neat foundation of fresh green leaves; a carefully laid bed of hemlock boughs.

The boy's breathing became stronger; he sighed, raised a hand to his bandaged head, opened his eyes. They were clear, perfectly sane eyes, though with a look of weariness in painful contrast to the youthfulness of the face. Curiously he let them rest on his surroundings—on the man and woman kneeling by him. When he spoke, his voice was that of a well-bred, normal American.

"I haven't the slightest idea where I am or who you are. Seem to have had a fall or something. It's very good of you to look after me, though," and he lapsed back into unconsciousness.

Aunt Elfrieda looked up at the colonel, tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh, is he going to die?" she whispered. "Please, please don't let him die!"

"I won't," answered the soldier. "I positively won't."

Mrs. Douglas was crying now without restraint, and she had no handkerchief, and the Southerner's arms were about her. He, too, was without a handkerchief, but tears may be kissed away, and kissing tears away is a dangerous process—it's simply impossible to aim correctly. One he missed—chased it down her cheek; their lips touched, and then clung, as she relaxed against his heart.

From the hemlock bed came a voice, not at all a dying voice:

"I say, this is a dream, of course, but an awfully jolly one. Phantoms though you probably are, you're ex-

tremely good-looking ones, and I hereby give you my ghostly blessing."

This is a really truly story—not some embryonic Balzac's attempt to submerge us in bottomless woe—so of course the pseudo maniac did not die. The big colonel carried him to the canoe without the slightest difficulty and made him comfortable among the cushions. There he slept the greater part of the way back, waking to speech only once:

"I've been knocked out, haven't I? Can't remember things very clearly. I'm sure some one crossed me in polo practice, and I had a spill. The rest is rather ridiculous. I seem to have been a prince in exile, or something, always hungry."

"Don't bother about it. Just go to sleep again," suggested Aunt Elfrieda. "Good idea," he agreed, and promptly did.

Never before had the lodge been the scene of such a sensation. The boy, still sleeping, was carried to a sunny, cheerful room, without waking, was undressed by Tommy and the colonel, and put into the first bed he had slept in for a full month.

Since every one at the lodge was human, and therefore frankly curious, they were all given a brief peek at the captive. Comments were diverse. The twins voted him very handsome, and Elsie was sure she had met him somewhere. Lady Jane announced that he was the best-looking dementee she had ever seen. Marjorie contented herself with saying that she would not have been in the least afraid had she come upon him in the woods, Mirandy thought he didn't look "as though he would steal no clock," and Tommy maintained that he must be "a regulah fellah."

With the morning, plans had been made that the Schultzes should take him back to civilization the very next day. The patient himself, meanwhile, was somewhat fretful and unhappy, even

with his sweetheart near him. However, the enormous breakfast that he ate precluded any fear of immediate dissolution, even if the doctor had not pronounced him on a fair road to recovery, in spite of his wound and undernourishment.

Aunt Elfrieda divided her time between the sick room and her beatific lover. Lady Jane, in a corner of the veranda, was teaching Tommy piquet and alternately reviling him for his stupid play and for holding all the cards. Elsie Stuyvesant demurely listened to a microscopic analysis of John Bailey's next case; she didn't understand a word of it, but she knew it made him happy to talk. Her twin was studying casting on the lake with Ferdie Smythe. The daughter, of the house alone had no one to entertain her.

Marjorie felt lonely and abused. One simply could not fish all the time. She was bored, plain bored, so she told herself, with everything, and the entomologist hadn't called on her personally for three whole days!

Wafted from the kitchen came an ultratempting aroma. Marjorie raised her grief-bowed head and sniffed interrogatively. There could be no question about it—Mirandy was baking cookies! And Mirandy's cookies were such as to make a miserable dyspeptic grit his teeth for self-control—and then succumb. The girl reached the kitchen just as a pan of the hot golden-brown things was being taken from the oven.

"Just three, Mirandy!" she begged.

"Land's sakes, child," cried Mrs. Stone, "eat all you've a mind to. My cookies never hurt nobody, though this batch don't look real crisp to me. I allers used to take off two minutes from the time they should bake by the old clock that maniac stole, and I just can't remember not to do it with the new one that keeps right time."

An inspiration came to the girl. She had—alas!—nothing to do and besides,

she was curious to see the place where the maniac had been found.

"Would you like to have me bring your old clock back to you, Mirandy?"

"I certainly would, Miss Margie. You don't know how I miss it, and how mixed up other clocks get me."

Marjorie's own private canoe glided swiftly up the lake, the girl paddling with long, even strokes. She drew the light craft up on the stretch of sand whence led the trail to the cave, and at that very moment another canoe slid up on the shore.

"You're some paddler!" exclaimed the entomologist, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I thought I never should catch you. Did you know this is the very spot where I first took your namesake, the Dark Wood Nymph?"

"No, is it? I just paddled over to get the kitchen clock. It was left in the cave. What brought you here to-day?"

"I—I—well, I saw your canoe—and I'm not coming back after we leave to-morrow. Going to Plattsburg."

In silence they walked to the cave. Marjorie's heart was a whirlpool of emotions—anger that he had not told her before of this; a knife-keen pain that he was going at all, a pain she made no attempt to understand; a nearly irresistible desire to cry.

They gazed with unseeing eyes into the cave where the clock was still ticking away steadily.

"I must take the clock," Marjorie said dully.

"Let me carry it for you," he suggested.

Silence again.

"I—I shall miss you awfully, Dark Wood Nymph. This—this has been—heaven. Will—will you miss me a little?"

Marjorie nodded, her face averted.

"I'm—— You—— I don't dare—— Oh, Dark Wood Nymph, Dark Wood Nymph, I can't go away without telling you! Of course I know it's De Kay whom you——"

"I hate Tommy," came in a whisper.

"You—hate—Tommy! I——"

"Yes," said Marjorie. "Yes, yes, yes!"

"Yes," he repeated. "Yes what?"

She raised her face to him, sweet, brave, tremulous, a hint of laughter in her eyes and more than a hint of tears.

"I should say, 'Yes, sir,' or, 'Yes, please,' according to the copy books," she answered, "but *can't* you understand? You were trying to propose to me—weren't you?"

"Yes," he gasped.

"Yes, yes, yes," she cried, and hid her face.

Without the slightest warning, the kitchen clock stopped.

Vaguely conscious of this change, they both half raised their heads. It did not seem worth while, however, to either of them, to try to account for this something different in their surroundings. Hand in hand, they went down the trail.

Silent, forgotten, the kitchen clock stood in the wilderness.

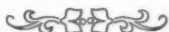




The Longest Way Round

By Elizabeth Newport Hepburn

Author of "The Hidden Force,"
"His Code," etc.



THEY were queer neighbors, the little hospital on one side of the street and the studio building across the way. One was trim, modern, fireproof—theoretically fireproof, that is—with a highly moral smell of iodoform and carbolic pervading the corridors, sometimes drifting into the street. The other was shabby, elderly, sagging wearily as a spiritless woman sags at the belt, touched by the infirmities of age and indifference. And yet the studio building had a cantankerous charm of its own, and the hospital was merely aggressive in its fresh, too yellow paint.

On a crisp, early autumn morning, a severely tailored young woman with a bag in her hand came down the hospital steps, and simultaneously a man with a young face and an elderly coat opened the door of the studio building.

The woman crossed the street to the mail box, which contrarily stood in front of the out-at-elbows studios, a fact that irritated our young woman, who preferred mail boxes to live on her own premises. She would now have popped her letters into the box in a trice if he of the shabby coat had not stood in her way, absently survey-

ing the superscription of a letter in his own hand, apparently unconscious that he was delaying the game for any one else. The young woman gave a little grunt of impatience; she could hardly help it, so unused was she to awaiting the leisure of others.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" cried the man.

He raised the flap for her with the grace of a Beau Brummel, and she thanked him, dropped her mail into its appropriate place, and would have instantly been off had not the unexpected occurred.

Her own name plumped out at her with surprising impact.

"Doctor Harrison, my name is Winter Holme, and a friend of yours, Miss Virginia Anstey, told me you and I were neighbors and gave me permission to introduce myself, using her name, if I got the opportunity. Do you mind my grabbing this chance? Or shall I run around and fetch Miss Virginia? She could be here in five minutes, you know."

After all, Cary Harrison was young, as well as that dread species "a woman doctor." She laughed, for her interlocutor looked so serious, so ready to "run" and that effectively. And she

remembered Miss Anstey's friendliness, her flashing appreciation of small whims and vagaries, of life's odd angles generally.

Winter Holme sighed with relief and sauntered cheerfully by her side, sub-wayward.

"I did that rather well," he remarked. "I feel smug about it! For I've watched you come out of the hospital at precisely the same hour every day for a week, but as you move swiftly and my clock is temperamentally deliberate, I couldn't intercept you before. To-day I set the blamed thing half an hour ahead—and here I am!"

The third time he called at her apartment hotel in the west nineties, he actually found her at home. He had tried telephone magic, but it had not worked. Always the line had been busy or she had been out. So when the languid colored youth who presided over the switchboard downstairs announced that Doctor Harrison was at home, the portrait painter was conscious of a distinct thrill of triumph. Upstairs in her private sitting room there came, however, a ghastly reaction. For the furniture was a shiny make-believe mahogany, the window curtains of an archaic lace design—immaculate, indeed, as was everything else, but stiffly starched—and the walls of the room were just *walls*. They had no quality of possible background for either pictures or persons, and the few etchings—really well chosen—lost most of their delicate charm in the fatal prose of their environment.

Winter Holme shivered in that room. If it had only been a regular office, for you hardly expected personality of an office! Then his hostess appeared, in a soft, silvery, crêpe-de-something frock, her hair done high and a warm pink in her cheeks. She looked most unprofessional. He was glad he had come. Yet all during his call he was

unpleasantly conscious of the room, sunny and airy and yet melancholy with the exceeding melancholy of sheer ugliness. Yet there were three windows on a peaceful street, with a good old church across the way and a glimpse of a near-by park. It possessed every possibility of charm, and not one realized.

Then abruptly he began to forget her setting in appreciation of her personality. He had asked her some question about her work, and she was answering with a flare of intensity in her clear voice.

"Mr. Holme, there are times when my work seems the only real work there is, the very biggest thing in life! And then something happens that makes me envy my scrubwoman, the fat-faced floorwalker in a shop, the very butcher over on Columbus Avenue, so red-faced and complacent and sure of his value to the community."

He had thought her dark eyes fine, but a little hard. Now he saw them blurred—and lovely. But she shook her head impatiently, at her own weakness, it seemed.

"You see, I lost a patient this morning, when we had operated and thought him safe. It was a boy, a splendid little chap. And I've been wondering whether we'll pull through another baby just as fine, a sturdy Jew baby, and whether, if we don't, the baby's mother will hate us forever and go away telling terrible stories about us and the hospital, as they do when we can't cure their sick."

After this, Holme decided to take the conversation in his own hands. You might "murder" your sitters, speaking in the jargon of the artist, but happily they did not always know it, and however bad your presentment of them, they usually continued to occupy their former place in the world. It seemed to him that portrait painting is a safer subject for discussion than surgery!

He told her about a woman whom all the world accounted plain, but whom Winter had found astonishingly lovely.

"It's her expression, the planes of her face, the way her eyebrows are drawn, and the unusual far-apart-ness of her eyes. Back of these things she has grit, an essential fineness. She's a rich old maid. Nobody knows her as a philanthropist or a reformer or a clubwoman—any of the things the world thinks a wealthy spinster should be. But she is a *wonder*—and I don't know how or why. She just *is*. Painting her is the best thing that has happened to me in years—except one."

She did not ask what this exception was. Already Winter was realizing that she rarely did or said the thing one expected. He asked her to come to his studio the next day, from the hospital.

"You need lose no golden moments, for I'll give you lunch—and you confess that food is essential."

"But your own work! I should shatter your day to bits!" she said in a shocked voice.

"I'm painting afternoons this week," he said. "My sitter comes at two-thirty, and you leave the hospital at a quarter past twelve. That gives us two hours, if you can stay so long."

She assured him she could *not*. She allowed herself just half an hour for luncheon, but she would come for that half hour and it would be very nice to see his work.

She arrived promptly the next day, and the studio door opened to her before she had time to knock. Holme stood smiling at her, in an old velvet coat of golden brown, behind him his big, quiet room with its great skylight, a room of soft buffs and browns touched by sharp high lights of copper or gold. On the monotoned walls pictures glowed—portraits, a few landscapes, here and there a mellow deco-

ration or a good bit of tapestry. There were fine faded chairs with wide arms and tall backs; there was an old, old chest of drawers rubbed to a wonderful nut-brown luster; there was a desk, curved in front like some great fiddle, a desk any poor devil of a scribe would have yearned for; while the walls were lined with books which added amazingly to the richness of the color scheme, and on the floor a long, narrow Kurdistan echoed these colors in a way that suggested infinite pains on the part of somebody. In front of the fireplace, where a wood fire burned chucklingly, a tea table miraculously turned the studio into a home, and the steaming kettle and something savory in a chafing dish smote the visitor with an instant consciousness of how heavenly it is to be hungry.

She dropped into a chair placed seductively between the table and the fire.

"I don't know how you do it, but I seem to have crossed a magic circle into Mars, or somewhere different! Yet I can see my hospital across the street—if I should go to the window. Isn't it queer? And you almost make me understand why people are always complaining about the smell of disinfectants! Wood smoke *is* nicer!"

Winter had a secret sense of triumph. Certainly she did *not* know how he had done it—a girl who could stand that awful hotel sitting room, not a week or a month, but two years, as he had discovered. Her sense of fitness, of harmony, must be latent. Yet she did like his place. She sat there eating creamed oysters and hot biscuit, purchased at a wonderful little French bakery. Actually, she wanted more oysters. Then she was asking questions about his pictures. She even dropped her coat and hat on the rug, and with them all her professional austerity. After all, she was just a dear girl, humanly alive to the charm of food and fire. The sweetness of

her was as pervasive as the perfume of a rose.

She continued to "want to know" about his work—about how he chose his sitters, when he *could* choose, and how he got that old, clear blue which the masters loved and which most moderns miss. He had it in that child's coat. Surprisingly, she was not ignorant of artistic values; on the contrary, she talked well of her favorites—Van Dyck, Israels, Rembrandt; the last only when he was not painting himself, she assured Winter shrewishly, rather as if Rembrandt lived in the next street.

She had not much to say of the Futurists, but she was intensely enthusiastic about some of the work of Arthur Davies, and she liked things of Childe Hassam's. Winter wondered how on earth she could live in that frightful ready-made place of hers and yet recognize really good art. He decided at last that she was like men he had known, connoisseurs and dealers, who would travel miles to see a fine painting and yet who lived complacently in the midst of the most nauseating mid-Victorian ugliness, probably initiated earlier by their mothers or their wives.

Like them, she did not *prefer* hideous furniture and starched lace curtains of an appalling stiffness; she merely did not see them at all, her mind being full of other and, to her, more vital impressions. She actually bore out this conception of her by echoing his thought.

"Do you know, Mr. Holme, I don't believe I notice that useful things are ugly until I am forced to contrast them with something beautiful? I haven't time, you see. Yet at least I can appreciate how some of those master workmen would have loved to paint right here—with your tapestries for background."

She did not add what was on the tip

of her tongue: "To paint you, too, in your old coat, against your own books, with your nice brown cheeks and considering eyes."

She suppressed this, not from any conscientious scruples against flattering the susceptible male, but because she feared such a speech might be nearer to insult than to praise. Men shouldn't be, primarily or even secondarily, paintable. Despite his pleasant smile and that twinkle in his eyes, Winter Holme was just a little too good looking. Surely a man so picturesque could hardly be virile—like Doctor van Kemp, for instance, with his great shoulders and his ugly, bumpy features and his steady hand, which could cut so strongly and swiftly through living tissues. However, she did not mention Van Kemp. She rarely discussed people and particularly those with whom she worked.

She rose at last to go, reluctantly. When Winter obediently told her the time, she gave a little jump and the color rushed into her face.

"After two! Why, I was to have been at St. Luke's before now! And afterward—"

But she had swept into her cloak, shaken Winter's hand, and fled down the long stair, before that slower-moving person realized his calamity—her departure.

Yet when, from his window, he watched her flying figure, her skirts and the ends of her scarf blown by the fresh wind, he turned with an approving nod to his studio. For she had stayed four times her half hour, and his sitter, the spinster with "the beautiful planes," would be here any moment.

Doctor Harrison found time to drop into the studio rather often, after this. She seemed to prefer it to having Winter Holme call in the evening at her apartment. Yet the portrait painter

had no delusions concerning this busy young woman. She liked him frankly; read the books he suggested, when she had time; went with him occasionally to concerts or exhibitions or to call on Miss Virginia Anstey; but somehow she kept her trim skirts clear of personal issues. She talked of Winter's work and of her own and of her patients—when things went well with them. When they went ill, she looked a little white and strained and made Winter do most of the talking.

He was clear about one thing—it would not do to fall in love with Cary Harrison. (To her face, he gave her her title, but he thought of her always by her unadorned little name.) One might enjoy her immensely, of course. She was unlike the women he knew, most of them "temperamental" to a degree. When she came into his studio, the room at once seemed bigger, the air tasted cleaner. Even that faint suggestion of disinfectant which sometimes hovered about her deft white hands he grew almost to like. At least it was better than those damnable perfumes so many women used.

One day she was tired and silent, more passive than he had ever seen her. He asked her no questions, but read her some windy, woodsy verse of Bliss Carmen's, and when she got up to go, reluctantly, she smiled at him.

"You've rested *mê*, helped me, Winter Holme," she told him, and was gone in that abrupt fashion of hers before he had found words that might hold her a little longer.

He went across to his easel and began a rough sketch of her head as he remembered it against the carved back of his most beautiful chair. He worked rapidly, with a curious precision. When he had finished, he drew in his breath sharply, studied the thing with narrowed eyes. It was the best sketch he had ever made; the girl herself seemed to live and breathe. He

put fixative on the back and hid it away in an old portfolio—and locked the portfolio.

One long Indian-summer Saturday afternoon they spent together in the open. On top of the Palisades, Winter had found a warm, sunny rock overhanging the river and that dream city beyond; they were alone in a world of grays and blues and faint purples, a world to enchant painter or poet or lover. It enchanted Winter Holme. And the girl who lay back against the rough overcoat he had brought along for her special use had lost for the moment that provoking look of primness and promptness and superlative efficiency. For the moment, she seemed no more efficient than some forest dryad in the Golden Age. Winter knew that only yesterday she had assisted at two mastoid operations, that she was looking forward to becoming the principal in such operations, but for this hour she seemed wholly unrelated to surgical instruments and clinics and iodoform. She was merely a girl in a blue frock that toned in with the landscape. She echoed the thought in his mind when she said:

"Did Puvis de Chavannes always plan his decorations in the fall? Do you suppose he ever saw this place—the river as it looks now, and the city wrapped in silver gauze? Because I feel as if we are just figures in one of his decorations."

"We are," said Winter, sitting up and staring at her. "You are a spirit of the air—younger than spring herself and horribly dangerous to the peace of mind of mortal man!"

"Yet really I'm neither dangerous—nor young," she said with a sigh. "Physicians are pretty well on in years when they get through their internship, and I've been working in hospitals and practicing for myself nearly four years. This sort of thing—playing about with men and hearing pretty speeches and

getting sun-and-wind dried—why, Mr. Holme, it would astonish you to know how little experience I've had—outside of my work."

Winter wanted to say something apt, to touch her hand, kiss that appealing curve of her cheek. He wanted to lean down and gather her to him—if he but dared. Instead of following his impulse, he merely sat a little straighter and said unrepeatable things beneath his breath. For an automobile party, whose strident horn they had heard a while back, tramped noisily across the flat face of a neighboring cliff, eulogizing the view. A man's voice came to them, virile, sonorous:

"This is the place—a sweep of the whole island! You'll confess it's some view!"

Holme disliked the man on hearing, for he might have possessed Manhattan and God's sunlight by right of purchase, if one judged by the possessive, inclusive swing of his arm, his self-satisfied, rumbling bass. But, turning to Cary for sympathy with his prejudice, he was confronted by an averted countenance and by a curve of cheek and an ear brilliantly crimson. He realized that she was avoiding recognition; he saw that her whole body was trembling. Then the invaders retreated. A woman's voice, insipid, bromidic, floated back to them:

"Such a marvelous view! Such a heavenly day! But, oh, doctor, you will drive carefully down that *horrible* hill?"

Winter said, as carefully as he could: "Some one you knew?"

She was relaxed now against her rock, but her face was still flushed, though she spoke carelessly:

"Doctor van Kemp, head surgeon of our hospital. A very able man."

Winter Holme desired to ask a great many questions—whether Van Kemp was married; whether he appreciated the human charm of his young assist-

ant—Winter hoped not!—whether he, Winter Holme, should run back and drag the surgeon from his car to the edge of the cliff and there tip him over—neatly and quietly of course! Van Kemp was a big man, but a bit heavy; Winter was sure that he himself was in better trim to meet any real test of strength and agility.

The portrait painter sighed and then grinned at himself. After all, how much had you a right to infer from a woman's blush? He made conversation deftly all the way home, but at the end of the day, he was still asking himself questions about Van Kemp and hating him illogically.

Within a week, she came to his studio, this time in the evening. It was her first special trip. Usually she stopped in on her way from the hospital, and Winter was conscious of a swift delight, as if his spirit had shot upward in some supernal flying machine. Then, after he had had a good look at her, he came tumbling to earth. For her face was set, and there were dark shadows under her usually bright eyes, a downward curve to her lips.

He hustled about, brought her some excellent liqueur, which she refused, and cigarettes, which she also waved away, asking him to smoke, however—and that was a comfort; for she looked so unhappy that Winter had almost felt he owed it to her to be wretched with her. After a long, companionable, smoky silence, she put out her hand toward him.

"Winter Holme, you're the sort of friend one reads about, but rarely meets! You're so restful—and so trustable!"

He leaned forward and took her hand. What he said tumbled out pell-mell, without arrangement or selection.

"Dear, you can trust me through any old hell we may stumble into! For I love you—and I'm afraid I shall go

on loving you, however you may feel about me. There have been women in my life before—I am not an infant—but they all are like pale, wavering shadows now. Cary, to me you are the very body and soul of love!”

Her hand trembled in his. Then she took it away and bent toward the fire. Its crackling and snapping were the only sounds in the room for a long moment.

“It’s abominable of me to have let you say that! For I’m not free. I have nothing left—to give.”

He told himself that he had known this before, but her corroborating testimony made him feel suddenly old and foolish. He lit a fresh cigarette.

“All right, my dear. Now suppose you treat me like a nice old human wastebasket of confidences and emotions. I gather that there is some incubus you need to get off your chest—that you came here to do just that. Go ahead.”

He had seemed an exceedingly lover-like person a few minutes back. He was now mature, reassuring, avuncular, one upon whose discretion any woman might safely lean. Cary smiled at him, but her eyes were wet. Then she turned back to the fire and talked to it, intimately, not always consecutively.

“I’ve known him for years—Doctor van Kemp. And I suppose I’ve felt this queer way about him, as I didn’t know I could feel, for a long time. His work, his way of handling people, situations, his tirelessness and doggedness and courage— Oh, if I can just make you understand!”

“At first I thought him heartless, a sort of extraordinarily perfect machine. And then one day there was a major operation which he performed on a young girl. Usually, you know, the patients are wheeled into the operating room, but this girl broke all the rules and regulations of the hospital. She walked in, head up, eyes meeting our

eyes steadily. She was the loveliest thing—a big, dark-eyed, splendidly built child of sixteen or seventeen. Even the queer things we make patients wear couldn’t spoil her. We knew she had never been ill and yet was in for a dangerous operation—the chances against her because it was a new adventure in surgery. It doesn’t matter about details, technical terms. Anyhow, we in that operating room had the deadly sensation in the pit of the stomach that surgeons are not supposed to know. But it comes, almost always, when the personality of a surgical case seeps through to us—I mean where there is great risk. Usually we look at patients impersonally. Perhaps the modern habit of denuding the patient of every atom of individuality—so that the thing we’re working on might be a mummy—is merciful to physician as well as to the patient and the patient’s friends. Until that day I had never thought out all this. But this girl gave us a shock. She was so vividly alive, so brave. She even laughed as she turned to Doctor van Kemp.

“They wanted to bring me in on a stretcher, or in a chair. But I just wouldn’t! I’m not afraid of the things you’re going to do to me, only I mean to *choose*—right up to the last moment!”

“You know, Mr. Holme, there is a new method tried out now and then. They let the patient anaesthetize himself. This girl would have approved of that! Well, we waited, and Doctor van Kemp looked straight back at her and nodded. He said:

“Bully for you, Miss Crewe. You mustn’t let us frighten you. And you *shall* choose. The nurse will do exactly what you say.”

“His voice sounded as cool as if we were in for some petty minor operation, but I was near him and I saw the little beads of sweat on his forehead. Then I knew he wasn’t a machine. He

was telling himself that the knife was her only chance—that at the worst she would only die a few months sooner.

"Well, she was on the table over three hours. Things were worse than the surgeons realized. It was a terrific strain, but Van Kemp never hesitated. He worked with magnificent swiftness and decision—that deft, sure, rapid work which means knowledge and spells success nine times out of ten. But the girl had made us all remember that tenth case. And then, as I said, it was worse than we had known. However, it was over at last. And the girl got well. But it was before she came out of the ether, before we could be sure of the outcome, that I saw Van Kemp alone for a moment, in his office.

"He looked another man—fifteen years older. Under his eyes those three hours had etched black caverns. For an instant, I thought he would topple; I caught his arm. He grinned at me like some embarrassed kid.

"All right, doctor. But I tell you this responsibility they thrust on us is a hellish thing! Sometimes I want to chuck it all and start in to manufacture china dolls or gumdrops—anything that won't mean this unequal grapple with death and the devil."

"Then he was gone, in his car, steering straight through the crowd at the corner with a steady hand. I stood on the step and looked after him. I had seen into his soul—only he hates that word 'soul!'—under the hard surface. And that's how it all began."

Winter Holme drew a long breath. She had made her own vision real to him. The aggressive personality he had imagined and disliked vanished before this conception of one of the world's master workmen. Yet he looked his understanding without speaking, and after a little she went on:

"That is the Van Kemp I worship, the man who saves life, happiness, hu-

man service to the world, and all as simply as another man might tie his shoe. But there is another side to him. When I knew him first, he was married. Then we heard of a divorce. Things were suggested, hinted at by the papers, things strange and unsavory. But he was too big to be hurt. His work and his success seemed merely to gain momentum. And in a way he was wise, for the women who worked with him knew him only in his professional capacity. He never made love to the nurses. We in the hospital saw the surgeon, never the libertine."

Holme threw his cigarette stump in the fire.

"Isn't that a hard word? People talk a lot about any successful man. You can't *know*—"

"I didn't, a month ago. Then accidentally—I can't tell details, names, but I came upon some facts. A woman of good position had loved him and cared too little for herself. He had seemed devoted, possessed by her. He had drained her of youth and joy as one drains a glass and then leaves it—empty. Oh, I hated to believe it! And of course she was not a child; in one sense, she was not deceived. She just loved him and forgot about herself, as some women do. And he took what she gave him—and stopped caring. Day before yesterday he asked me to marry him."

"And you accepted?"

"Almost as bad. I didn't wholly refuse. I asked for time."

"Anything more?"

She went on staring into the winking, sputtering fire.

"I knew that about him, knew that other things of a similar character must be true, knew that his wife had divorced him here in New York, and yet—well, I saw in him still my surgeon, tenacious, heroic, clean with the fire of utter devotion. He would risk his life any day, to forward his work. And he

was honest; he never made the slightest effort to deceive me. He told me he had been unlucky in his attachments to women, that he couldn't offer me a spotless record, that he had found no woman whose personality held him until he met me. He said that for three years he had cared for me—and wanted to marry me, but that he had tested himself this time, that now he knew I could hold him, if I would. And then——”

“And then?” said Winter Holme sharply.

“We were in my place that evening, and it was getting late—time for him to go. He came across the room to me, holding me every step with that strange possessing look of his, the look that at once frightened me and fascinated me. Then he caught me in his arms, against his heart—held me as no man had done before— Oh, Winter Holme, I wanted to die with the thrill of it! I remembered the other woman who had loved him too well, remembered his wife who must also have loved him, once—and yet, anyway, I wanted to keep him—wanted to promise him everything, give him everything—then and there!”

Holme huddled over the fire. Outside, the wind was rising and the roar of the city came to him, wintry, ominous, different. Cary sat with her head bent a little, tense, concentrated.

“I see now that I had never understood passion, never realized the call of the blood, the call of youth, the primitive, elemental, tremendous forces. I had been obsessed with my work. That had been my passion. Now I suddenly became a woman, aching to possess and be possessed. I cared neither for his great work nor for his horrible selfishness. *I just wanted him!* His touch meant more than any vision of joy I had ever conceived. And I believed that I could hold him; that, married to me, he would

give me the love a husband gives his wife and the fiercer, more primitive passion that some men give only to a mistress.”

She paused, relaxing in her chair. The long, lovely lines of her body smote Holme with a fresh consciousness of her beauty, her nearness, and her inner remoteness from him and his love. She loved another man, and in a way Holme had thought her incapable of even understanding. He said gently at last:

“Go on, dear.”

“I suppose I seemed passive—to him. I was trying to hold on to myself, for I was afraid. But not of him! He took my face between his hands and said in that new, fierce voice: ‘Have you nothing to say? Nothing to give me?’ And then, Winter, in sheer self-defense I told him a lie—said I was not sure of myself, that he would have to wait for his answer. It was a little as if I were saying it to a wolf, or to one of those roaring lions in the zoo! But he let me go. He said that he wanted me to choose, that he must have everything or nothing. That was night before last. I stayed awake. In the morning I sent word I could not go to the hospital. Instead, I went to the country and walked—fifteen or twenty miles, I think. And to-night I came—here.”

“In the name of Heaven, *why?*” cried Winter Holme.

She looked at his drawn face and smiled, a queer, uncertain little smile.

“Because I wanted to make myself see how much I should have to give up in marrying him. Because I knew you would help me to understand myself better. Lastly—well, I had to—see the studio again. It’s become dear to me. I hate my own bald, cold apartment. I should hate any new place I might make for myself. Yet a woman can’t marry a man just because she likes to sit beside his fire.”

“Your brute of a surgeon earns ten times what I do,” said Winter grimly.

"Money is easy to get when you have it to start with," she said. "His father left him a good deal, and last year he made thirty thousand. He had some important cases, and one ten-thousand-dollar fee—the wife of one of those new ammunition millionaires. He did that same operation in the wards the next week for nothing, and just as well! But, you see, Winter, all this luxury he would wrap me in I'm afraid of! I like to think earning my living matters—that my own work counts."

"Women don't go on fearing luxury—after they taste it!" said Winter dryly. Then he added in a different voice: "Cary, give up this damned doctor and marry me! You'll be poor enough then, but you'll have your own work—and my worship!"

Her color bloomed, and she smiled straight into his eyes. Winter harked back to that trim, cool young practitioner he had first known, and he felt that Van Kemp had metamorphosed her. She was lovelier, far, and—for him—more unattainable than she had ever been.

"Thank you," she said. "Oh, Winter Holme, I'd *rather* love *you*, marry *you*! You make me feel so safe! You respect my ambition, even my egotism, the things I want to do and be. But with him—— I'm afraid! The primitive throwback in me yearns to be possessed and bullied and adored, wants to live and breathe through him, wants what he wants—and yet the other Cary Harrison, whom you have known, stands aside and wonders, and says perpetually, 'Do you know what you are doing? *Do you?*'"

"About that other woman," said Holme painfully. "Of course I know nothing about the case, yet don't we all possess just what we can keep, and no more? Van Kemp belongs to you now because he loves you. That, I think, is the man's code. Almost every son of woman might have to confess that, some

time, somewhere, he has left a woman whom he might, could, would, or should have married. Even if things never went—too far."

She held him with her gaze.

"You, too, Winter?"

"Not in just the same way, perhaps. I tried to let things down gently, gradually. And there was no 'moral hazard' as the insurance people say. But I was involved. I had thought I cared—told her so. And then, later, I found I didn't care enough, and got out. Fortunately for me, she ended by caring for some one else—whom she married. But that was my good luck."

She continued to look at him; then gave a little sigh of relief.

"You need not try to damn yourself to excuse my falling in love with a man who has proved unfaithful to women," she said. "You're not that sort. You would be loyal to your friend or your wife. Heaven knows what I am going to do—how I shall act. But at least I'm not fooling myself. I've not lost my sense of values."

She put on her hat deliberately, rose to her feet. Winter went over to her.

"Dear, has coming here been any earthly help to you? Because to me it has seemed pretty wonderful——"

"Yes, Winter. Having it out has steadied me. There wasn't a woman I could talk to—and no other man who would understand. I don't yet see my way clear, but I'm not afraid any longer." She put her hands on his shoulders. "It's absurd, but I should like you to kiss me good-by. It may be the last time I can come here, but I still belong to myself. Do you mind?"

He had a fleeting wonder at her faith in him—and at her queer, blind selfishness. But he kissed her—very carefully—and then took her home.

It was long before he saw her again. But a note came to him within a few days:

Winter, I want you to know all that I know myself. I'm not well, and he has suggested that I go South for a month with his sister. She's nice to me—a strong, splendid-looking woman, beautifully taken care of, the protected type you see on Fifth Avenue in the fall after a long summer in the open. She's never been overworked in her life, and she's married to a successful man. They have three boys, and they all look like my surgeon, which is another thing in his favor—the splendidness of those children, their likeness to him. He knows it, too. There isn't much he misses. So Mrs. Thom, the children, and I leave town to-morrow—Ashville, Palm Beach, the places my kind of woman reads about, but never has time to visit. He's coming later.

Dear Winter, you have been good to me. Whatever happens, I shall always remember how you have considered me first, never yourself. And I shall look for news of your work. But then I shall be back long before the spring exhibitions. Only perhaps you won't care to see me then—for you understand. I couldn't go with her if I were not almost sure that in the end— Well, you know. Don't think I like myself; I'm more cruel and selfish and primitive than I knew. But what you said helps to justify me in my own eyes—that we belong to those we love, and he does love me. Of that I am very sure. So you see. Oh, but this letter will cure you! I know that.

CARY.

Yet it did not cure him. He read it many times, told himself that her whole personality was altered by this passion which possessed her, that it was his business to forget her. He worked as a health-loving invalid takes a cure, painted violently, went into a competition for some mural work, held himself to a fury of creation, and ever and again slipped that sketch of her from his locked portfolio and looked at it with hungry eyes.

The winter passed somehow, and when the spring exhibition was on, he had four pictures accepted by an appreciative jury, three hung on the line. The portrait of his beautiful-ugly spinster took the Hazeltine prize and squeezed amazing compliments from the critics. On the strength of "this strange and compelling portrait of a

personality," as one of them put it, Winter Holme promptly received three portrait commissions from plutocratic, if not illustrious, personages, and whenever he appeared among his fellow artists, he was surrounded, badgered, questioned, and irritatingly lionized.

He wanted to enjoy all this, and was miserably conscious that somehow there was no savor in his little taste of fame. It all seemed curiously irrelevant and impersonal. What he found himself waiting for, studying the papers to discover, was news which had tarried those long months.

On the last day of the exhibition, around noon, when people had gone to lunch, leaving the galleries almost empty, Winter saw some one standing in front of his prize portrait. He had come to meet a brother artist, missed his man, and was bemoaning the iniquity of this morning of golden sunlight wasted. Now he crossed the great room. It was she, yet so altered that he gasped with surprise. The vigorous girl he remembered, with her obvious competence and unwilling grace, seemed utterly lost in this maturer woman, slender almost to emaciation, pale, exquisitely dressed. If she had lost her look of vivid youth, she had gained an extraordinary distinction—something even beyond that. Only when she smiled at him did she become unmistakably Cary Harrison.

His eye instinctively sought her left hand, but she wore her gloves still, though his doctor girl had been the sort of woman who always takes off her gloves on the smallest provocation. Then for a moment her smile made her completely his.

"Winter Holme! Oh, but I am glad! And it is wonderful, the truest thing here, the simplest, the most distinguished! I'm as proud as though I had painted it myself!"

"When did you get back?"

"Several weeks ago—but I've avoided you, everybody, until to-day."
 "You're married?"

"Take me to your studio and I'll tell you everything. I want some lunch, the chafing-dish kind—no, *not* in a restaurant. I can't talk until I get to your place."

Half an hour later, she was occupying her old seat by his fire. Winter had given her his latchkey and stopped to buy a succulent steak and mushrooms—in fact, all the delicacies she liked. He reflected that any other woman he knew would have celebrated his success and their meeting by letting him take her to the Plaza or Sherry's. Well, it might be the last time he would have her quite to himself and it should be a memorable last time!

When he reached the studio, his hands full, she greeted him from his own hearth, her hat and cloak tossed on the rug in her old reprehensible fashion. The fire that she had built and coaxed into a brilliant blaze brought out the copper in her hair and pinked her thin cheeks a little. But she would not talk of herself or of him until he had cooked the food and served them both. Then she ate ravenously, like a person who had been half starved.

"And I have been," she said. "How I *hate* big, gorgeous hotels, food you choose from a card and pay enormous prices for, waiters who watch every morsel you eat—or don't eat!—and who resent your preferring water to wine! But this! Winter Holme, you can paint—but you are also a born chef!"

"Have you been back to your hospital yet? Or is all that past now?"

The question broke down her barrier of bright irrelevance.

"I've started in at a new hospital uptown—and I'm working over on the East Side again. To-day I saw the baby we pulled through last fall. He's a great, fat thing, healthy as a puppy!

And I even made a speech for suffrage yesterday."

Winter was walking up and down the room.

"Are you married or not? For God's sake, tell me!"

"I'll tell you *my* way, or not at all! I was engaged for three months. Hans' sister chaperoned me even when she had sent the children back to New York. He came down to see us—stayed weeks at a time. They both bullied me about clothes. I dipped into my savings and bought and bought—sent here for things, even to Paris—little me! It was astonishingly interesting, too. You see, it was to be my trousseau, though I wore some of the frocks when they came. We were to have been married quietly last week—at the Ponce de Leon. We kept it out of the papers. And, Winter, he adored me, owned me, bullied me, made love to me! He does know how! For a long time I hadn't a moment to think, to realize. But I found he hated my work, wanted me to give up practicing, wanted me 'just to be beautiful'—for him.

"And I was obedient. The first time they dressed me up, I nearly walked through a mirror in the ballroom. I didn't know myself in a low frock, no sleeves, pale yellow—the sort of dress you read about, too beautiful to be true! I had never thought much about my looks before, but clothes—they're miraculous! But everything was so exciting that I began, to get thin. When he stayed too long away from his work, I stopped eating and sleeping. But even when he left us, he wrote twice a day, telegraphed." It was all like a moving picture—one of the whirling kind that make you dizzy and blur your eyes."

She stopped for breath. Winter went on walking up and down.

"For Heaven's sake, go on! What happened?"

"We quarreled—always about the same thing—my work. He laughed at my wanting to go on with it—said he wanted a wife, not a partner; that one surgeon was enough in the family. His idea of 'freedom' for his wife is that she shall have no work to do of any sort, except that of bearing his children. And when I thought of those splendid youngsters of his sister's, I almost felt the same—until I began to wonder whether a mature woman could ever get over being an individual, a modern, her own boss! When I told him how I felt, he would laugh at me and then make love to me like the original cave man—and I cared horribly, wanted to be bullied, to be loved *his* way, if it killed me. But I was tired all the time, sleepless, keyed to breaking point. And I lost my surgeon utterly. He wouldn't talk to me of his work when he came, tell me about the hospital.

"At last I began to feel horribly lonely, more so when he was there. I stopped sleeping for more than a few hours a night. I used to lie there and wonder. If being engaged was so exhausting and upsetting, what would marriage do to me? I used to think of the way I had worshiped him in the hospital, and how all that was over. He didn't want his wife messing around during working hours, assisting at operations, understanding just how fine and big he really is, professionally! And I suddenly saw that if I couldn't have *that* man, I didn't want him at all!

"I got up one morning and wrote a note to him and one to his sister. Before they were out of bed, I was on the train for New York. Oh, Winter, that was a horrible day! Every mile I went from him hurt! Leaving him was torture! But the train rushed on. Once here, I found a little hotel he had never heard of. For days I never went out. I was trying to find myself, to feel sure that I could live without him. And then at last I saw your picture, came

here, and discovered what I really want!"

"Did you?" Winter's eyes were burning. He stood still, staring at her.

"It was Hans who woke me up," she said deliberately. "I wasn't a woman—until he showed me—myself. I cared for nothing but my work, my patients, that hard, shiny hospital across the way, the very smell of it. Now I want that—and something more."

"What do you want, dear?"

She whirled about in her chair.

"*I want you to want to paint me!* In the ballroom, when for the first time I saw myself as I could be, do you know what I thought?"

"What, Cary?"

"That it was hateful, humiliating—your never having asked me to sit for you! I was beautiful to Hans, to his sister, to those strangers in the hotel, to the very children—but not to you!"

Winter went to look for his portfolio, unlocked it, took out a drawing, and placed it before her on an easel. Vivid color stained her throat and brow.

"Oh, Winter, did I ever look to you *like that?*"

He turned his back on the sketch, faced the original, laughed at her.

"That! It's nothing, the merest suggestion! I've been haunted by the things I might do of you—in that yellow frock, perhaps—as you look now in the firelight—in those white togs you wear in the operating room. Why, Cary, I shall always be wanting to paint you—and falling short, cursing my inadequacy! You aren't 'pretty,' thank God! Nor 'beautiful,' 'picturesque'—cheap, hackneyed words! You're vivid, baffling, wonderful, *you!*"

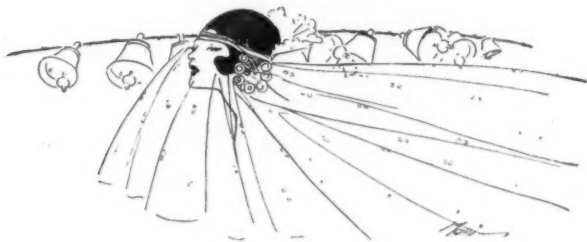
She gave a funny little sigh of sheer gratified vanity. Then she looked from that surprising sketch about the mellow room—at the books, the pictures, the long, narrow Kurdistan echoing the inimitable hues of the bind-

ings. She came back to Winter's eyes, reading in them not merely his love, but that respect for her personality which is the very corner stone of success in marriage.

Without word or touch, they shared

one of life's unique moments, an intimacy sacred, irrevocable, a joy beyond that of speech or action. At last she opened wide her arms:

"Oh, Winter, it is *home* to me, your blessed place!"



EVANGELS

SOME find the way through very love
 To that diviner air,
 And some must go through blinding woe
 To gain that haven fair,
 And some without the flaying knout
 Would never enter there.

And those who take the gentler way
 Go softly, free of stain;
 And those who tread to find their dead
 Are cleansed of their pain;
 But the stinging rod that whips to God,
 Its marks must still remain.

A twisted boar's skin soaked in brine
 Is a weapon fierce and fell,
 And in the hands that Zeal commands
 It serveth overwell,
 Yet doth it drive a soul alive
 To God's white citadel.

Doubtless, who come through grief or love
 There enter glad and shriven;
 But he who waits within those gates,
 His tears are for these driven,
 Poor souls of sin that, knouted in,
 Fall bleeding against heaven.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



Love Maggy

By Countess Barcynska

Author of "The Honey Pot," etc.



CHAPTER I.

THE footman opened the door and announced "Lady Sheldford"—to vacancy.

"I beg your pardon, my lady," he apologized. "Her ladyship was here a few minutes ago. She must have gone out."

"I'll wait," said the marchioness. "Please let her know."

The man withdrew. The marchioness remained standing where she was. The expression on her face was inquisitorial; there was almost a challenge in it. She had come predisposed to criticize, and she looked about for something on which to pass judgment. One of the first things she caught sight of was the reflection of her own countenance in a mirror. It would have inspired awe in another person, but the marchioness was not unpleasantly affected by it. She had seen it at frequent intervals for sixty years and was used to it.

Her attention wandered from one object to another, on the lookout for changes. And because she saw none, she was nearly as provoked as she would have been if she had. She was disappointed. She had come with the fixed idea that she would find changes which it would be necessary to resent as much as she resented the ex-chorus girl who would be responsible for them.

It was intolerable that Chalfont, her

godson, fastidious, exclusive, should have imported a tawdry creature—a wild animal for all she knew—with amber-colored hair and painted cheeks, into his time-honored home; should have given it his name and expected people to recognize it. It was a blow from which she had not yet recovered. Chalfont was more to her than a neighbor. His mother had been her cousin and dearest friend. When she had died, leaving an infant son, himself posthumous, the marchioness had at once annexed him. She had brought him up, fulfilling her self-imposed charge faithfully and well. In spite of a difference of twelve years in their ages, Chalfont and her youngest son, Lord Lancing, had always been on the most fraternal of terms. Until now she had considered Chalfont a model of all the virtues. Of late years he had lived his life as a man and accordingly had been out of her ken for months at a time, but no talk of a propensity in him for wild oats and stage dalliance had come to her ears. Besides, Chalfont was over the wild-oats age. His marriage to this person, popularly known as "Maggy," by whom everybody seemed swayed, was simply inexplicable to the marchioness. She had avoided an attempt to solve the mystery by refusing to meet the new viscountess until to-day.

She had heard things about her, of course. Lancing daily brought home his quota of Maggy's doings and sayings. To these his mother turned a deaf ear. And she had also refused to see Chalfont. But she had had to listen to a certain amount of talk from other people. The county had called at Purton Towers and was full of "Maggy." It was reported to her that in London Maggy was the *dernier cri*. Her marriage had attracted as much attention as the last new religion; men adored her, women admired her. One heard nothing discreditable about her. Her beauty was incessantly talked about, but her popularity seemed based on her many good qualities.

It was undeniably true—the marchioness had heard it from an unimpeachable source—that soon after coming down to the Towers, she had sat up with a bailiff's wife all one night when a midwife had been unprocurable. She had cooked the bailiff's breakfast while he had sobbed over a dead child. It was true that she had provided an unnamed infant with clothes innumerable and had driven its shameful mother in her own car to church for its christening; true that in a moment of impulse she had wheeled a barrow around the estate, distributing a surplus of peaches to Chalfont's poorer tenants. She would kiss the small village children and encourage all the village dogs to such an extent that they followed her home whenever they caught sight of her. There were many other instances of her accommodating nature.

The marchioness had heard them all and still held to her preconceived opinion of the real characteristics of an actress elevated by marriage into the peerage. She had heard of and seen several such experiments. None of them had altered her conviction that marriage under certain conditions was the one impropriety tolerated by the police. The ha'penny papers and popular

clamor might weave a halo of romance around such unions—the silly sentimentality of the crowd was capable of anything—but the marchioness was not so easily got at. She simply refused to be convinced against her will. She called it reserving her judgment. She had allowed six months to elapse before she called at the Towers. The six months were up to-day.

Her cold gray eyes—colder than the woman herself—traveled around the room on the alert for the changes she had dreaded to see. The room, more boudoir than drawing-room—for in the time of Chalfont's mother, boudoirs had not become *démodé*—had apparently not been touched. There was a reason. Chalfont had told Maggy that it had been furnished for his mother on her marriage. Maggy had held it sacred from that day.

The marchioness was uninformed on these two points. She was looking for the mark of the actress. She could find none. No multiplicity of autographed photographs in silver frames offended her eye; neither was the atmosphere poisoned by the reek of scent. She began to wonder whether Maggy Chalfont was a person of character or entirely devoid of it. No other type of woman can refrain from reorganizing an already furnished room and making it personal.

Over a painted satinwood *escritoire* hung a portrait of Chalfont's mother. Beneath it some one had placed a bowl of white roses. It did not look like the handiwork of a servant. It suggested rather a mute offering of respect, an oblation. The marchioness blinked approval at it. This Maggy, then—perhaps she was not playing up for popularity all the time. The marchioness would know soon. Anyway, the roses looked nice there. They made a silent appeal, as flowers will to the hardest of women in soft moments.

The marchioness lifted her eyes to

the portrait. She wondered how the original would have received the person, Maggy. She had been a charming, kind-hearted girl, very tolerant. There was no hardness in that face. The marchioness read a reproach in the soft eyes. It made her ask herself whether, just lately, she had fulfilled her promise to take the place of a mother to Chalfont. Men of thirty-four do not need mothers; they seek women of pleasure or wives. Still, she turned from the portrait a little guiltily. As she did so, she caught sight of the one eyesore in the room, its solitary innovation—a crochetwork antimacassar that made the Beauvais back of a Louis XV. sofa look incongruous. Involuntarily her hand shot out and removed it.

"How perfectly awful!" she murmured.

A sleek head which had been reclining against the offending object was raised in sleepy protest.

"Oh, I say, Maggy!" it complained, and then the eyes blinked in surprised recognition. "Good heavens, mother! You here?"

Although the marchioness had thought herself alone in the room, she was not greatly disturbed by the unexpected discovery of her son's presence. She held the antimacassar as she would have held a dead mouse, at arm's length, and with much the same repugnance.

"What an anachronism!" she exclaimed. "What is it doing here?"

"Oh, that!" said Lord Lancing. "It's an antisomething. You see them in hotels on the backs of chairs and over the arms. Hair-wash protectors, you know. That's what she put it here for. She made it specially for me. You can see my initial in the corner. She's making another for my favorite armchair in the hall."

"And who is 'she,' pray?" inquired the marchioness.

"Why, Maggy, of course. She

doesn't think my bay rum is good for old French tapestry. I'm not sure she isn't right. Hadn't you better put it back, mother? She's rather keen about her crochetwork. Makes no end of it."

He took the despised article gently from her and replaced it.

"When you know Maggy," he continued, "you'll love her for that bit of anachronism, as you call it. I dare say it strikes you as glaring bad taste, but that's because you *don't* know her. When you do, you won't think about what she does, only the way she does it. She's ripping. There's no one quite like her."

"So I should gather."

"Oh, I don't mean what you mean," said Lancing a little hotly. "You think she's a freak just because she was an actress. Take my word for it, mother, you're wrong. You wouldn't know she'd been on the stage. She's not a bit theatrical. You can't imagine Chalfont going in for an ordinary picture-post-card advertisement of somebody's patent teeth, can you? One may do that sort of thing at twenty-one, not at thirty-four."

"I'm quite prepared to find her an abnormal young woman," said the marchioness coldly.

Lancing surveyed the austere lady helplessly. He felt powerless against her pride and prejudice.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming?" he complained. "I'd have prepared her—given her time to put on some war paint."

"I dare say she uses quite enough of the other kind. They call it grease paint, I believe."

"Now, mother, you're talking rot! You simply don't know. No one uses grease paint off the stage. If she painted at all, it would be a dry make-up."

"You seem very well informed on the improper subject, Lancing. Are you speaking from experience or hear-

say?" asked the marchioness suspiciously.

"Neither. I read about it in *Answers* in the train one day, if you must know. It was by a music-hall star, so I suppose it was correct, although the grammar was surprisingly good. But that's not what we were talking about. Maggy doesn't paint. You could dine off her face."

"How crude you are, Lancing!"

"Sorry. I meant to be poetic. Thinking of strawberries and cream, you know."

The marchioness' interest in the discussion suddenly evaporated. She fidgeted.

"What a time that man is!" she complained.

"I expect he had to go down to the poultry yard. It's Maggy's time for feeding her fowls. Shall I go and find her or ring for tea?"

"As you're so entirely at home, you might ring for tea."

Lancing laughed.

"I am at home, I admit," he said. "I was awfully afraid Chalfont's marriage would make a difference. It generally does between men. But it hasn't, I'm thankful to say. In fact, I live here, partly."

"I don't need reminding of that. Why don't you sleep here as well?"

"Oh, well," he deprecated, "Maggy's in bed then."

The marchioness lifted scandalized eyebrows.

"What I meant was that I might as well be anywhere else then," said Lancing uncomfortably. "Seriously, mother, she's all you could wish for in a woman. Be decent to her, now you've come. Don't take it out of her. She can stand up for herself, but she wouldn't to you. It would only be like a big, bullying turkey attacking a game little pullet."

No one but Lancing would have dared to say anything so disrespectful

to his formidable parent, and even he relied on the privilege accorded to the youngest born. He got up and rang the bell and then strolled to the window. Maggy would probably come in that way. He was very anxious that his mother should get a good impression of her. She could not fail to do so if she had time to take in Maggy's radiant appearance, her brilliant face, the sheer charm of the girl. Lancing felt it a tremendous privilege to be on intimate terms with her, and he wanted everybody else to appreciate her. The loveliness of his friend's wife was not the sole reason for his enthusiasm. There was something else about her—a delightful something entirely beyond expression—that aroused in him a homage which he felt the whole world ought to share.

Presently Maggy came into sight.

"Lady Chalfont approaches," he murmured, and narrowly watched his mother for the effect he felt sure Chalfont's wife would have upon her.

The marchioness was full of curiosity and did not mind showing it. She took her stand by Lancing's side and focused the oncomer with her lorgnette. A quite beautiful young woman, in a brief tweed skirt and a shirt blouse, was walking swiftly toward the house. A white chicken was tucked under her arm; a dog of indescribable origin followed at her heels; a ginger cat brought up the rear. Maggy was singing blithely in a breezy, but occasionally flat voice. The words of her song drifted in:

"All's well with the world, my friend,
And there isn't an ache that lasts;
All troubles will have an end,
And the rain and the bitter blasts.
There is sleep when the evil is done;
There's substance beneath the foam;
And the bully old yellow sun will shine
Till the cows—come—home!"

"Dear me!" said the marchioness. "Fancy anybody paying to hear her sing!"

Maggy came in through the long windows. She did not know the marchioness by sight and was not expecting a visit from her.

"My mother," said Lancing. "Charles went to find you."

Maggy shook hands. She did not show any surprise or any undue gratification or nervousness. She was just natural. So was her "How do you do?" The marchioness, a stickler for good form, evacuated her first line of prejudice.

"Charles must have missed me. I hope you've not been waiting long," said Maggy, and smiled.

Under her smile, an icicle would have melted. It was more potent a weapon in her armory of natural charms than the arsenal full of physical enchantments of the average pretty woman. It was entirely unforced, friendly. It had in it the quality of a child's smile. There was nothing behind it. It said: "I-like-you-I-hope-you'll-like-me-and-isn't-everything-jolly?"

"Ring for tea, Lancing," she went on. "Oh, here it comes." She looked apologetically from the marchioness to the white chicken. "Do you mind 'Trousers'?" He's called 'Trousers' because of the feathers on his legs," she said—and paused. "What do I call you? 'Marchioness' or 'Lady Shelford'? I haven't met a marchioness before, and I'm never quite sure about titles."

"Call her 'Aunt Lizzie,'" said Lancing, and escaped from the room on the pretext of looking for Chalfont.

"Of course that was a joke. I expect it's 'Lady Shelford' when I have to shout across a room and 'marchioness' on the envelope when I write," said Maggy thoughtfully. "Then you don't mind Trousers?" She deposited the bird on a chair, where it kept quite still, with its beady, expressionless eyes full on the marchioness. "He's awfully tame and he won't have anything to do with the other fowls. He doesn't think

he's a bird at all. He was rather ill and I kept him in the bathroom and rubbed him with oil. He's been quite human ever since. Don't you think animals are sometimes more human than human beings?"

"I'm afraid I'm not very well up in natural history," answered the marchioness.

She felt a trifle lost. She had expected her hostess to have the acquired voice and manner of the smart shop-girl, that peculiarly irritating alto which she and the stage duchess—and nobody else—seem to think represents the tone of the aristocracy. Maggy's unstudied naturalness had a disarming effect on her. For once in a way she felt at a loss for words. When the dog and the cat, respectively addressed by Maggy as "Onions" and "Mrs. Slightly," settled themselves at the feet of their mistress, it struck her that they, in common with the white chicken, wore an air of reserve. It turned the tables on her; made her feel as if she were on probation. Then the eyes of the two women met and measured.

Maggy was quite sensible of her visitor's defensive attitude. She made allowances for it. By the standard of birth and education, she herself was nobody. The other was a great lady, a sort of queen. Roughly, Maggy knew the story of King Cophetua and the beggar maid—all well-known stories come to the stage—and she no more overestimated her own social position than the heroine of that story did. Independent 'she might be and was in many ways, but before real distinction and high birth, she had the virtue of humility. She had almost sympathized with the marchioness' reason for aloofness. Now that she had shown a disposition to unbend by calling, Maggy was correspondingly appreciative.

"I think you're very kind to come and know me," she said. "I won't pretend that I didn't care because you

didn't come before. I cared because it hurt Chalfont. Now that you have come, I should like you to know this: I'm not a minx. I'm not sure what a minx is. An animal of some kind, I expect, that bites when you're not looking. Although I was on the stage—and the worst kind of stage—I never intrigued to get Chalfont to marry me. He was good to me. He made me feel like a grateful housemaid and ever since I've done my best to show it and to behave as a lady should. I dare say I shall succeed in time. Am I talking too much?"

"No. Go on," said the marchioness.

"I think I'd better, now that I've begun. I wouldn't show you the inside of my works except for this—you've plenty of reason for disapproving of me, and I'd rather you didn't. In fact, I'd much prefer you to think well of me if you possibly can. I'm immensely proud of being Chalfont's wife, and very thankful to any one of his own set who treats me as his equal, although of course I'm not. I shall never forget what I was, and I shan't need a lot of reminding. I'm not going to let Chalfont be ashamed of me if I can manage it. As far as table manners go, I can pass muster. I learned at the Ritz and the Savoy. They're like Oxford and Cambridge for actresses.

"After all, my animals are an encouraging example. Onions, for instance. He was a hungry mongrel who ate them." She twiggled the dog's ear affectionately. "I found him rooting in a dust bin. Now look at him. He's a perfect gentleman—at least at heart. He wouldn't touch that bit of tea cake you've dropped, without permission, although he's slobbering for it. Pick it up, Onions! So there's hope for me if a dog can learn manners. Mrs. Slightly isn't so reformed. She'd still have kittens in a drawer on my best hat if she thought it soft enough. But who could blame her? I don't wonder

cats are always having families. Kittens are so delicious. They ought to have the king's bounty, I think. You shall see the last batch before you go."

The marchioness passed her cup.

"You remind me of a character in a novel I once read," she said. "I can't remember who it was, but she rattled on about everybody and everything that came into her head."

Maggy laughed.

"I deserved that. But I haven't finished yet. A book is much more manageable than a talkative person. You can shut it up if it doesn't appeal to you. I want you to understand about Chalfont, even if you don't care about me. I shouldn't like you to think he sat in the stalls and waited at the stage door. I don't think he saw me on the stage more than twice. We met at Mrs. Lambert's. You must have heard of her, because nice people knew her, although she was an actress. She was awfully good to me. It was after she died that Chalfont had us—my friend, Lexie, and myself—down here to spend Christmas with him and his aunt, dear Mrs. Pardiston. I dare say she told you about it. It was just heavenly for us two poor girls! I hadn't a notion that I should ever see Purton Towers again, but one night I was in trouble and miserable and I didn't want to go on living—in fact, I tried not to—and he found me—and he asked me to marry him. I can't fit in the spaces. They're too deep."

The marchioness was staring into her teacup. Nothing would have made her admit that her feelings were stirred.

"Now you know the main facts," said Maggy with relief. "And before we get off the subject, if there's anything you'd like to ask me, will you do so now? I'll answer whatever you want to know. You've as much right as Chalfont's mother would have had. I'm ready."

The marchioness raised her eyes and

looked Maggy full in the face. Her glance had in it some of the qualities of a searchlight. If Maggy's almost childlike confidence had been assumed, a pose, she would have seen through it. But whatever the girl was or had been, the marchioness was certain of her sincerity. She had come to pay a belated visit, chiefly for Chalfont's sake, partly to express her rankling hostility in as many dartlike thrusts as polite small talk would allow. Maggy's frankness had made this impossible. Figuratively, she had opened her blouse to show the beating of her heart. Figuratively, also, the marchioness laid down her unused foil. Maggy was invulnerable to attack. The marchioness had no longer any wish to wound her.

And Maggy was waiting—to answer painful questions.

"My dear child," said the old woman, "Chalfont, only, has that right. But I appreciate your confidence, all the same. There are only two things I would like to say. First of all, I should like to beg your pardon, and secondly I should like to know whether I may kiss you." There was something very noble in her next words; they were in the way of additional amends for her past hostility. "I haven't a girl of my own," she added.

Maggy raised a cool and beautiful cheek.

"It was sweet of you to say that. You—you make me feel proud," she said with a little quaver of gladness. "Oh, here's Chalfont—and Lancing. Lancing dear, will you fetch the kittens for your mother to see? They're in the airing cupboard of my bathroom." She turned to the marchioness. "And if you'd like one of them, I'll bring it as soon as it can lap."

"But mother hates cats——"

A look silenced Lancing.

"Maggy and I were talking of kittens, not cats," said the marchioness in reproof. "Go and fetch them, please."

She held out her hand to Chalfont. There was something of an appeal in the gesture. It expressed contrition. Chalfont came over and kissed her affectionately.

"Love Maggy," was all he said.

CHAPTER II.

Maggy was dressing for dinner without her maid. Dressing was not a rite with her. She liked more than anything to get it over and potter about the room. It was more an apartment than a room; in its main features, more of an "exhibit" than an apartment. It was the sort of room you come across in a national museum of works of art; only nothing quite so perfect was to be found in the Louvre or the Victoria and Albert or the Metropolitan.

When the Chalfonts were not in residence and Purton Towers was thrown open to public inspection, awed sightseers filed in and out of Maggy's bedroom, wondering what it would be like to sleep in such sumptuous and rare surroundings. The commoner sort entered it agape and ejaculated, "My word!" The amateur connoisseurs that write about art in the penny weeklies surveyed it with portentous gravity and called it "a feature."

The bedstead was an immense affair, a piece of domed and canopied history of William and Mary's reign. Its carving was superb. The old brocade of its hangings was embroidered with a royal crown. Queens had slept in it. Its vast bulk stood on a dais. Maggy called it "the omnibus" when she was in a flippant mood. The rest of the furniture was in keeping with the bedstead, age-smoothed walnut sinuously carved, high-backed. The room was paneled to a great height, also in walnut. The groined ceiling, painted by Cipriani, was a mass of chubby angels floating amid mellow-toned clouds.

Opposite the bed, a carved structure

in high relief surrounded the fireplace. It reached from floor to ceiling. A dead-and-gone Chalfont of an ecclesiastical turn had brought it from Italy, where it had formed the reredos of a church. Tradition had it that he had excused the sacrilege by casuistically maintaining that he was only robbing Peter to pay Paul—his own apostolic name. Tiers of carved figures, like sentinels, stood in the niches of this sacerdotal edifice. At first they had made Maggy feel "nervy" at night. She had had the illusion that one of them kept wagging his finger at her. When it had occurred to her that the attitude was one of benediction and not censure, she had developed quite a friendly feeling for the unknown saint.

The only modern appurtenance of the room consisted of the plain ivory-backed brushes and a few silver toilet appliances that lay on the dressing table. Maggy would never let Chalfont replace these with more expensive ones. Not one of the hundred-and-one pots and vials containing creams and cosmetics, to which she had once been unnecessarily addicted, had a place there. She had made a clean sweep of them when she married. They reposed in a locked drawer, together with her battered make-up box and a few odd theatrical belongings. Once locked, she had never reopened that drawer. She retained the things only because of a superstitious feeling that something would happen to her if she threw them away altogether.

For the rest, bright chintzes and a profusion of flowers made the room a woman's room. An individual touch was provided by her own crochetwork. In spite of Chalfont's amused protests, she had insisted on adorning dressing table, chests, and bed table with her best specimens. As it happened, they were extremely good ones. Finally there was a stool on a twisted frame, on which Maggy knelt to say her pray-

ers. Without it she could not reach up to cup her face in her hands on the edge of the high bed.

Maggy's prayers were very odd. She sometimes said them aloud to Chalfont. To him they were the most beautiful prayers he had ever heard. It is doubtful whether Maggy could have repeated "Our Father" quite correctly. But she did not attempt it. She generally asked God in a friendly way to keep on helping her to be good; to look after the baby of the girl in the village who was lacking in maternal instinct, until she developed one; and for heaven's sake to keep His eye on Chalfont when he rode that devil Whitelegs; and to remind her always never to forget. Also to bring to her notice as often as He could all the people who were dreadfully unhappy and hard up, so that she could help them. There was one prayer she always prayed in silence. Chalfont never knew what it was. She would not tell him.

But Maggy was not thinking of prayers now. The dinner bell would soon ring, and she was hungry. She pinned a huge rose with a very wet stalk into her dress and then moved leisurely about the room, touching things here and there, patting a cushion, putting a buttonhook straight. Maggy was extremely tidy.

Then she sat down on a high-backed sofa and folded her hands in her lap.

"One hundred and nine Sidey Street—and this!" she said aloud.

"What of it?" inquired Chalfont, looking in on his way down.

Maggy beckoned to him. When he came in, she pulled him onto the sofa beside her.

"I love you in evening dress," she said. "You look so tubbed. But then of course you always do, and I love you in anything—in tweeds and blue serge and flannels and a tall hat and boots and slippers——"

"Sounds rather patchy," he laughed.

"Never mind me. What about Sidey Street? Where is it? Didn't Alexandra live there?"

Maggy slid her hand into his.

"It was the street off the King's Cross Road where Lexie and I shared a bedroom at ten bob—shillings, I mean—a week. You never saw it, did you? It was our bed-dining-drawing-room all in one. And our bathroom as well. There was an orchestra thrown in—a cistern in the next room that made all sorts of gurgly noises through the wall. It used to leak sometimes, and then the wall looked as if it was made of blotting paper."

"No, I hadn't met you when you were living with Lexie," he said.

The reminder brought a look of distress into her face. It reddened slightly. She found herself recalling something she wanted to forget.

"I was forgetting. But somehow it sticks in my memory more than—than the flat. I was in Sidey Street for three years, and by myself, too. Lexie only came at the end. In the summer we baked. In the winter we were frozen. I used to send out for fried fish and chips then. They thawed us. Even Lexie got to like them when the coal scuttle was empty and we couldn't afford to have it filled. You need never wonder why poor people are so fond of fried fish and chips. They get them cheap and hot."

Chalfont's hold of her hand tightened.

"Oh, it wasn't so bad," she continued. "Especially after Lexie came. It makes such a difference, sharing unpleasantness with some one you're fond of. I wonder why I think of Sidey Street so often. It's the contrast, I suppose. And now, instead of me, there's some other poor devil in that room, going through the same thing—making a tin of sardines last three days; getting off the bus half a mile before she wants to because a penny

won't take her any farther; arriving at the theater hungry and with cold feet, only to hear the other girls talking of their dinners and their jewelry and their furs and their boys! And then going home after the show and getting into bed with her clothes piled on top and longing for a hot-water bottle; and—I wonder if she'll end up by marrying into the peerage?" she ended comically.

Of late, Maggy had not indulged in reminiscences of her stage life. At times it had been a struggle to make ends meet. Chalfont knew of this in a general way. But she had been comparatively flourishing when he had first met her—well dressed, in great demand among the advertisers of all those aids to female beauty which are so systematically pushed by means of the photographs of pretty actresses. Miss Maggy Delamere, as the pictorial protagonist of the merits of a certain cigarette, a particular hair wash, soaps innumerable, face creams, somebody's corsets, and somebody else's furs, had figured in all the illustrated papers. At that time she had occupied a flat. Chalfont had never been there. He had never inquired into her mode of life. He would have considered it bad taste to have done so. He was very little of a theatergoer or a diner in the restaurants where actresses congregate. Had he made Maggy's acquaintance at one time or the other, it is highly improbable that a stage-door intimacy between them would have resulted.

But he had met her socially at the house of a friend, who, though an actress, happened to be a lady, and their acquaintance had developed on terms of equality. With one episode of her life—an unhappy one—he was familiar. For that she had his complete sympathy. They never talked about it.

Generally, Maggy's reminiscences were of the light and bright order, whimsically expressed and therefore

amusing. This talk of extreme penury in a poor lodging gave Chalfont an uncomfortable sensation. It hurt him to think of her suffering hunger and cold. Her quaint recital of it almost aggravated the pitiful story.

"Why don't you put it all out of your head?" he said.

"It wouldn't be good for me," she answered seriously. "I might get stuck up and think I really was the Viscountess Chalfont."

Chalfont laughed.

"But you are," he insisted.

"Not really—inside me. I'm still plebeian Maggy, who's acting a part. I'm acting when I'm giving dinners and going to them—acting not to give any one a loophole to say I'm vulgar. I know there are certain people who'd swallow me whole whatever I did because of you, but they're the pit and gallery."

"You don't think much of the critics in the pit and gallery?" he asked playfully.

"Well, they don't dine with you," said Maggy. "I wish we could live the whole of the year round down here."

Chalfont thought. He, too, would have liked to keep Maggy to himself in the country all the year round. But he knew that, if he did, society would argue that he was ashamed of her. And Chalfont was a proud man.

"I don't think we can avoid London altogether," he said. "Besides, you know you're wanted there—not by the pit and gallery."

"Oh, I'll stick to it," she said manfully. "I only want you to be pleased with me. It would be awful if you regretted having married me. Do you think you ever will?"

Chalfont did not think so. He was a man of very few words, peculiarly reserved. Not even to Maggy did he voice the depth and strength of the love she inspired in him.

She jumped up and gave him a childish hug and a pull.

"We'd better go down, hadn't we?" she said.

"Aren't we alone to-night? Is Lancing staying?"

"No." Maggy made a wry face. "I've asked the vicar and his wife."

"But, my dear child, they'll bore you terribly. You needn't have asked them unless you wanted——"

"I asked them because Mrs. Vicar wants my advice about her daughter, Joan. What sort of a girl is she?"

Chalfont was not interested in his vicar's daughter.

"I really don't know," he said. "She was a schoolgirl when I saw her last. She's been away governessing since. Lancing says she's grown quite pretty."

"I expect she wants to go on the stage. A clergyman's wife wouldn't want my advice about anything else," ruminated Maggy. "I shall have to talk to her like a mother." She giggled. "The inaugural meeting of the Purton Church and Stage Guild was held in the drawing-room of the Towers on Thursday evening after port and nuts, with Lady Chalfont in the chair. I suppose you do sit at meetings, or do you kneel? I don't think I could give sensible advice about anything kneeling. At least, not for long. I should get cramp. What do clergymen's daughters want to go on the stage for? I've met some. It must be a sort of epidemic. They run amuck worst than most, or they pretend to be frightfully respectable. Then they're unbearable." Her face hardened.

"The two Banbury sisters are like that. They go everywhere. Selfish cats, without an atom of talent, married to actor managers! Lexie had an introduction to Ivy Banbury and went to her house. It was a snowy day, and Lexie was covered with icicles when she got there. The Banbury was having tea and hot cakes. She didn't

offer Lexie any or ask her to sit down, although she'd kept her waiting half an hour. She looked offensively at the snow on her shoes, asked what her height was and made a note of it, and said she'd ask her husband if he could give her a walk-on, and then rang for the footman to show her out again. I believe it's that sort of swank that gets their husbands knighted. I shall enjoy meeting Ivy Banbury—in society! Talking of society, Lady Shelford was telling me I ought to be presented."

"Yes," said Chalfont. "I'd thought of that. I was going to ask my aunt to present you."

"Mrs. Pardiston?"

"Yes. Don't you like the idea?"

Maggy looked dubious.

"Lady Shelford wants to present me herself," she said reluctantly.

Chalfont was gratified. It meant that the marchioness had accepted Maggy without reserve.

"I'm glad," he said.

"But I thanked her and said no," rejoined Maggy.

Chalfont looked puzzled. Maggy's quaint reasonings and turns of mind were sometimes a little beyond him. But she was not laughing now. She seemed in earnest, and rather afraid that he might tease her.

"But why?" he asked.

She hesitated.

"Oh, you wouldn't understand. The queen—I could bob to her in a crowd in the street, but curtsying to her in her own drawing-room! I wouldn't dare! It wouldn't be proper. I have a holy respect for royalty. The queen is so good. It wouldn't be fair of me. Come along, let's go downstairs."

She stood up and gave him her hands. Chalfont was not a demonstrative man. If anything, his feelings were kept too much under control. But now he bent over Maggy's hands and kissed them before he let them go. She might be wayward, incomprehensible;

she might not always observe the strict rules of social etiquette; but she had the saving grace of very real humility. It showed in her reverence for goodness and greatness. In spite of her self-disparagement, there was a tinge of the royal in Maggy herself. She was never little, and sometimes she touched greatness.

CHAPTER III.

"Before my marriage, I was a Hogg of Abbott's Piggott," said Mrs. Fanning complacently, as she sipped her coffee.

The vicar's wife and Maggy had the drawing-room to themselves. Chalfont had taken the vicar into the library to talk parish politics.

"No, really? How awfully funny!" giggled Maggy.

Her levity annoyed Mrs. Fanning. A complete belief in her own importance and an absence of any sense of humor allowed her to introduce her strange-sounding lineage with extraordinary confidence.

"We're in 'Burke,' of course," she murmured pretentiously.

"Where's that?" asked Maggy. "Oh, it's a book! Does it end happily? I'll read it if it does."

Mrs. Fanning explained with an air of patience tinged with exasperation.

"'Burke's Landed Gentry,'" repeated Maggy. "I suppose it's a sort of middle-class stud book."

She knew quite well what it was, but could not resist a wicked inclination to shock the pretentious woman. She bored her. Chalfont was probably being bored in the library by her husband. She was beginning to regret her hospitality. There was something a trifle too didactic about the vicar and his wife.

"Upper middle class," corrected Mrs. Fanning. "The pedigree of the lower middle class could hardly be recorded."

"How funny it would be to get up an actresses' pedigree book!" said Maggy. "It would read rather like an auctioneer's catalogue. Theatrically speaking, you know, the worse the breed, the better the actress. You wanted to talk to me about the stage, didn't you?"

Mrs. Faning had come with three topics in view. She meant to get them all in.

"About the girls' club, and the stage, and Rose Hale," she answered.

"Right-o," said Maggy light-heartedly. "You're rather a long way off. I'll come nearer."

She left her chair and took another that gave her a closer view of the Gothic configuration of Mrs. Faning's collar bones.

"About the girls' club," she began. "I thought it was all arranged. Besides, it's nothing to do with the church. I wanted your husband to lend a room, that's all. It struck me, directly I came here, that the village girls have a rotten time of it—no one to take any interest in them. No wonder some of them go wrong."

Mrs. Faning's upper lip stiffened. A spade might be a spade, but she preferred to hear it spoken of more euphemistically.

"So I just want to give them a good time," Maggy went on. "No religion; just games and music, and somebody to show them how to make pretty blouses and things like that. I'll give them the stuff and hats to trim. And they can have a guest night and bring their sweethearts. The way to keep a girl straight is to make her happy. I've studied the village-girl problem a bit," she added diffidently.

"Indeed?"

The modest statement irritated Mrs. Faning. Both she and the vicar considered that Maggy was spoiling the village people, taking their views and their wants too seriously. Mrs. Faning

certainly had more experience of country diplomacy than Maggy could be expected to possess. She had lived all her life in small villages and she had "district visited" ever since she could remember. She was assured that Maggy's rural activities were partly the result of overconfidence and partly due to a sense of self-importance. At any rate, they were to be discouraged. By and by she would tire of common country people. Mrs. Faning thought she knew all about motives and new brooms.

"Indeed!" she said again. "You know it takes a long time to understand the peasant mind. And you have only lived six months in the country, I believe."

"That's all. And I don't pretend to understand the peasant mind. I dare say I shall in time, though. But I do understand girls. We're all sisters under our skin, you know. Since I've been here, I've talked to the girls and I've been in their homes. They tell me things. I can get at these country people because I like them and because they're not on the defensive with me. What's the good of saying, 'I told you so!' to a girl? She's much less likely to go wrong if you don't preach at her."

"I'm afraid the vicar won't be able to see his way to providing accommodation for a club if chapel girls are also to be admitted to it," said Mrs. Faning uncompromisingly. "We can't be undenominational in a village like Purton."

Maggy showed surprise.

"You mean he won't lend one of the parish rooms? Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I'll have the club here. The girls can use the billiard room. Lord Lancing and Chalfont will be able to teach them billiards. Now what did you want to ask me about the stage?"

A cold look had come into Maggy's face. She was beginning to understand Mrs. Faning. But Mrs. Faning was

far from understanding Maggy. She brightened up at mention of the stage.

"I want to talk to you about our daughter, Joan," she said complacently. "She has great dramatic gifts. She has been teaching elocution, but of course that doesn't give her talent much scope. I'd like you to hear her recite. Mrs. Guy Miles—she's sister-in-law to Esmé Hubbard, you know—says that she ought to make her fortune on the stage."

"Esmé Hubbard hasn't made *her* fortune on the stage," returned Maggy with a meaning that was wasted on Mrs. Faning. "I think it's a shame to bolster up amateurs like that. It's deluding them. It makes them chuck—I mean, throw up safe jobs and regular meals for—hard times and awful disappointment. But of course you don't want your daughter to go through that experience. Send her to me when she comes home and I'll talk to her."

"That is very kind of you. I'm sure Joan will get on if she has the right kind of advice and good introductions."

"Oh!" exclaimed Maggy. "You mean you want me to help her to get on the stage? I'm afraid I couldn't do that. I wouldn't help any girl onto the stage who could keep off it."

This was an unlooked-for setback to Mrs. Faning. She had not dreamed that Maggy would be unwilling to help her daughter. She had the reputation of being good-natured, and it was so little trouble to give introductions.

Mrs. Faning thought it showed broad-mindedness to encourage Joan's histrionic ambitions. Properly chaperoned, pushed by the influences of an actress peeress, she could see no harm in Joan's embarking on a serious stage career. When she thought of the stage, she had Shakespeare or schoolroom plays and pleasant amateur rehearsals in mind. Of stage life itself—its crudities, its drabness—she was wholly ignorant.

"I should be so disappointed if you really meant that," she said. "You have succeeded and—forgive me—you have married well. If Joan is given a chance, she ought to succeed, too. She's very good looking and has a beautiful figure. Socially, of course, she has everything in her favor. Here, what prospects has she? She might, of course, marry Lord Lancing, but he's not really well off. We have high hopes for Joan."

It was Maggy's turn to feel disconcerted. She had nothing to say. Here was a woman who should have been a good woman, who posed as a good woman, actually desirous of launching her own child into what Maggy knew to be the most treacherous of seas, with the avowed object of widening her matrimonial market! From that moment she became the unknown girl's protector and champion.

Mrs. Faning read her silence incorrectly, and proceeded:

"If you would give her letters of introduction, or speak to some managers about her— After you've seen what she can do, of course. For instance, you know Mr. De Freyne?"

Did Maggy know De Freyne? De Freyne, the jaded king of musical comedy; De Freyne, who had got rid of Lexie, Maggy's best friend, because she couldn't dress in silks and furs on thirty shillings a week, and who had taken her on again when he believed she had discovered an easy way of solving the problem; De Freyne, who without scruple had introduced Maggy herself to Woolf, well knowing Woolf! De Freyne! The name was odious to her. Repugnant memories of it crowded on her—the indecorum of the stage, its blinding glare, the blackness of its shadows, the pettiness of theatrical life, the paint, the dust, the very smell of the theater.

"Oh, yes, I know Mr. De Freyne," she admitted lightly. "He used to fine

me once a week. I'll tell your daughter all about him, and then, if she likes, she can go and see him."

"Thank you so much." Mrs. Faning hesitated. "You'll be very careful what you say to Joan, won't you, Lady Chalfont? Guarded, I mean. She's so innocent. Her ideas of life are quite—quite fresh."

Maggy stared at her.

"And you, want her to go on the stage?" she said in a curious voice. "I don't understand. Perhaps I shall when I see her. Meanwhile—— But about Rose Hale. Is her baby better? It was this morning."

She wanted to make it clear that the subject of the stage was closed. Mrs. Faning gathered so much. However, she had achieved her purpose. Maggy had as good as promised to interest herself in Joan. Not with alacrity, but after judicious persuasion. A person who is persuaded into promising a thing generally performs it more thoroughly. That Maggy, in the days to come, was to rescue Joan from the selfsame waters wherein she herself had been shipwrecked was one of the things that Mrs. Faning could not foreknow. Neither could Maggy.

Mrs. Faning stiffened again. There was something of the quality of buckram about her, physically and mentally.

"I want to advise you about Rose Hale," she said, "or, rather, to ask you not to intervene in her case. I and some of the ladies of the parish are trying to arrange things for her. Before this unfortunate event, the girl was flighty. Ever since, she has been absolutely shameless. Look how she dressed the child up and paraded it!"

"She worships it. It's a lovely baby. What do you all want to do with her?"

"We want to get her out of the village and into a home."

"What kind of a home?"

"An institution where young women

who have gone astray are kept under supervision."

"Oh!" cried Maggy aghast. "It would be wicked, downright wicked! A girl like that! A nice girl! She *is* a nice girl," she said with a touch of defiance.

"I don't think you understand, Lady Chalfont. Rose's character was notorious. Ask any one."

"I don't believe it. Rose has told me all about herself. She was only silly. If anything has to be done for her, I'll take her on as a servant here if my husband will let me. I know he will. But what is the use of talking like this? She can't leave home to go to an institution, or even come here. She has the baby!"

"The baby died at six o'clock this evening," said Mrs. Faning.

Maggy started up.

"Oh, how dreadful!" she cried. "The poor, poor girl! And she's all alone, except for that awful old grandmother! Mrs. Faning, you must excuse me. I must go to her. I'm awfully sorry. I expect Lord Chalfont and the vicar are in the library. I'll take you there."

She sped the astonished woman out of the drawing-room and into the library, where she made a breathless excuse for her hurry, and fled, hatless, stopping only to struggle into a coat of Chalfont's on her way out.

"Well, what do you think of Lady Chalfont?" asked the vicar. It was a fine night and the couple preferred to walk the half mile to the vicarage. "An impulsive young person," he added. "Where did she rush off to in such a violent hurry? To the Hales? How very extraordinary! And what a pity! I dare say Lady Chalfont doesn't appreciate that she is interfering. All the same, that sort of thing—interesting herself in my poorer parishioners—is calculated to undermine my authority."

"I gave her a hint on that very point,

but I saw it was wasted on her," said his wife.

"Dear, dear! Instead of the girl being treated with the severity she deserves, now she will be kept in countenance and pampered. She will be quite unmanageable after this."

"Yes, it's a pity," agreed Mrs. Fanning. "But I don't think that sort of activity will last long with Lady Chalfont. New brooms, you know. You must set your face against it in future. I was talking to her about Joan. She has promised to take an interest in her. I should let her have the parish room for the girls' club, Henry. You could gradually get it under your own control." She sighed sorrowfully. "What infinite possibilities she might have for doing *real* good! As it is, I am afraid she's a little unprincipled."

They walked on.

At that moment Maggy, in a cottage bedroom, had her warm young arms around the quivering shoulders of a distraught girl. She was telling her not to look like that; not to say those things about God, because she didn't mean them; to remember that He had given her her little baby—and wasn't it better to have had him for a little while than not at all?—beseeching her to come and look at him just once, lying there so sweetly, and then she would be able to cry, just cry.

CHAPTER IV.

Chalfont picked up the penny exercise book that lay spread-eagled on the floor. For once in a way, he was spending the evening alone. Maggy was upstairs, dividing her attention between his aunt, Mrs. Pardiston, and her friend, Alexandra Meer, both of whom had arrived on a visit during the afternoon.

The old exercise book was dog-eared, scribbled over, torn in places. Pasted

into it here and there were press cuttings. Maggy had unearthed it from some of her old belongings and, without giving its contents more than a casual glance, had tossed it to him as she went out of the room.

"My triumphs!" she had said with a shy laugh. "You know, that's what the papers always call the little successes actresses make."

It came as news to Chalfont that she had had any experiences on the stage other than that of the chorus. She had never alluded to it before. She did not seem to take her old profession or herself seriously. All Chalfont knew was that she abhorred stage life from the bottom of her vehement soul.

And yet here were a number of newspaper reports of her appearance in serious plays. Although they had taken place in unimportant provincial theaters and had been chronicled only by uninstructed country critics, they gave the impression that she possessed abilities beyond those usually found in a front-row show girl. Chalfont correctly attributed her previous silence on the subject to modesty.

Maggy was twenty-two now. From her "album," it appeared that at eighteen she had toured the provinces as a principal member of an inconspicuous theatrical company, and achieved a success proportionate to its standing. The notices were of the kind customary with the provincial weekly—more advertisements of the local theater and "our esteemed fellow townsman," its proprietor, than a criticism of the play and the players—but Maggy's name was prominent in each of them. She was "effective," "winsome," "talented." In such and such a part, she showed "histrionic powers distinctly above the average." In another she "moved the audience to tears." Sometimes she "carried the whole piece on her shoulders." One budding and venturesome critic, after witnessing a performance

of hers in "our admirably conducted Corn Exchange," had predicted that "Miss Delamere's powerful portrayal of the part of *Portia* would inevitably lead to her recognition as one of England's most accomplished actresses." Alas for this prophecy! In her next engagement, Maggy had "portrayed"—in tights—nothing more important than one of the forty good-looking thieves in the pantomime of "Ali Baba!"

Whether she possessed any real dramatic gifts was uncertain, since nobody qualified to express an opinion had seen her act. That she had the right temperament for the stage was undeniable; but she was so devoid of vanity and the craving for public applause that she had made no effort to train herself. Without being commonplace herself, her aspirations had always been simple ones. She would have been perfectly happy in a cottage with Chalfont. Whenever she thought about them, which was not often, the magnificence of the Towers and the prestige of her new position rather oppressed her than otherwise.

The old exercise book, in its cheap, shiny black cover, somehow brought the Maggy he had first known vividly to Chalfont's mind—the Maggy who had comforted him with her queer philosophy when he had been mourning a dead friend; the Maggy who had cheekily come to borrow diamonds, not for herself, but for the adornment of Lexie on a first night; the tragic, heartbroken Maggy who, when she had been abandoned by the blackguard she had trusted, had tried to make away with herself.

She had not altered in essentials since those days—she had only adapted herself to her new environment. She still gave play to all her old ebulliences; she continued to have a fatal facility for shocking prim and proper people; she still wore her heart on her sleeve. Chalfont's servants and tenantry adored

her. They respected her as well, which does not always follow. Wherever she went, whatever the vicissitudes she had been through, had still to go through, Maggy always drew and always would draw love. Between Maggy and love there seemed to be what scientists call a "centripetal tendency."

Chalfont went on turning over the leaves of the book. Toward the end, where the press cuttings ceased, Maggy had made odd jottings of events and dates of discharged debts. One of the latter was to this effect:

I owe Mrs. Bell	
Cocoa	2d
Tongue	1-6
Radishes	1
Cress	½
<hr/>	
	1-10

It was characteristic of her that she had totaled the score against herself, reckoning the halfpenny as a penny.

Chalfont was laughing at this when Maggy came in.

"I've just tucked your dear, honorable aunt up in bed," she said. "I think she's tired by the long journey. I wish she could live here always, Chalfont. I'd like to have her to fuss over. She's such a dear! 'Miss Hippo' is sleeping with her."

"Do you mean the tortoise?" he asked vaguely.

"No, you goose! Miss Hippo is the sweet puppy I brought home from the village last week. The fat, toddly one."

Chalfont exercised his memory.

"Oh, the one you stole outside the blacksmith's!" he said. "You queer soul! Why do you love dogs so much?"

Maggy perched on the arm of his chair.

"I think I must have been one," she said thoughtfully. "I always want to howl when I hear music, especially when it's bad. And I often feel I'd like to point my nose at the moon. And

I quite understand the feeling of going mad with delight and digging a lovely muddy hole with my two front paws and poking my nose in and sniffing the earth. I think I'm only different from a dog in one thing—I don't want to roll in the dirt directly I've had a tub. You know, I don't think they roll then because they *like* being dirty. They probably feel dreadfully conspicuous, just as you did when you were a little boy and your nurse curled a beastly topknot on your head and put you into your best clothes."

She gave a mercurial jump on the padding of the arm rest.

"Oh, I do feel so deliciously happy to-night! It's because your dear aunt is here, and my precious Lexie! And that reminds me of what I came in to say. Do you mind if I sleep with Lexie? We want to talk all night. And then I shan't have finished! You know, we haven't seen each other since we left the Pall Mall, and we've got our marriages to talk about and our husbands and ever so many other exciting things!"

Chalfont had his arm around her waist.

"Run along, then," he said.

"I can't. You're holding me."

"You're free."

"That's like you!" she said with sudden seriousness. "That's you and me, every time, isn't it? You're holding me, but I'm free."

He did not quite follow her meaning, and she did not explain.

"Goodness!" she exclaimed. "You're not still wading through that old book? I can't think why I bothered to keep it. It's awful rot. There were heaps more cuttings, but I got tired of sticking them in. Or else I was hungry and ate the paste. What were you laughing at when I came in?"

He showed her the bill and the mistake in it.

"Mrs. Bell always had me all ends

up," she observed inconsequently. "Oh, no, don't look at that!"

But Chalfont had already looked.

"Who is 'P. T.?' " he asked.

Maggy averted her head.

"I'm sorry you saw it," she said in a low tone. "You know who he is—that beast!" Her face was crimson.

"But—'P. T.' Those are not his initials," he said thoughtlessly, and immediately regretted it. He felt as if he had disturbed the loose earth on a recently made grave.

"It was a—pet name," she faltered. "Oh, God, don't ask me any more! Even a mother might have a pet name for her son who turns out to be a murderer!"

Chalfont pushed the book away from him.

"That's all right, Maggy," he said contritely. "It was my own fault for looking at it. Good night, dear. Run along to Lexie."

Maggy hesitated a moment. Then she kissed him vehemently, passionate penitence in the caress.

When she had gone, Chalfont's eyes fell again on the penciled page. There was some fatal attraction in it. His heart felt stabbed, aching. Words written there told him of a Maggy he had never known, would never know:

First met P. T. July 29th.

Lunch Romano's Aug 1st.

Lunch at P. T.'s house Aug. 3d.

Dinner Aug. 5th.

P. T. so nice to me. Lexie cross.

P. T. took me to see the flat Aug. 7th.

Left Sidey Street Aug. 8th.

He turned the page. Had not Maggy done so, too?

Overleaf there was this last entry:

Nov. 21. Lord Chalfont sent me some flowers.

Gummed to the page was a rosebud—a Catherine Mermet.

Some of the pain died out of Chalfont's face. It grew tender again.

CHAPTER V.

Although she was ready for bed, a presentiment made Alexandra Meer postpone undressing. It was the first moment since her arrival at Purton Towers that Maggy had left her alone.

Maggy had met her at the station, held tight on to her hand all through the drive home, "hooshed" the maid from Alexandra's bedroom the moment they entered it, herself unstrapped her precious visitor's luggage, poured water into the basin for her to wash her hands, and even tried to save her the trouble of taking her shoes off. Not content with that, Maggy had dressed in Alexandra's room for dinner.

Now that she was alone at last, she kept listening for returning footsteps. It was not like Maggy to say good night outside the bedroom door. She sat down and waited for her and thought about her. Within five minutes Maggy was back again. She came in boisterously, with a hairbrush in her hand and a nightgown over her arm.

"Chalfont says I may sleep with you to-night, Lexie darling!" she cried. "I should have, anyhow. I haven't said half the things I want to. Just think of it! We're both married, and you're going to have a baby and I'm not! And I'm the Viscountess Chalfont and you're Mrs. Bernard Meer, with a throat-specialist husband! And here we are not a bit altered or more frilly, and just as frightfully fond of each other! Come on, give me the brush. I'm going to brush your hair. Let it down."

"Do you know, Maggy, I was half afraid you might have altered," said Alexandra with a sigh of content.

"Great Scott, why?"

"Well, I have in some ways, I think. Marriage makes a difference."

Maggy stopped wielding the hairbrush.

"To people like you I expect it does.

You get suddenly grown up and dignified, like a girl with her first long skirt; and you give the impression that you've been let into a secret that nobody else in the world knows. It's the proper married-woman air, my dear. All respectable people have it. You couldn't expect marriage to make all that difference to me," she added with characteristic candor. "You were a good little girl, Lexie, pet."

There was a touch of remorse in her voice. Alexandra knew the reason. An unaccountable impulse provoked her, in spite of herself, to probe to its root.

"Do you hear anything of—Fred Woolf?" she asked in a low voice.

A bitter look came into Maggy's face.

"I read in the paper that he was in the bankruptcy court not long ago. I think he's training horses somewhere. One of them—Lady Susan's—won a race at Newmarket last month."

"You've never seen him?"

"No. But when we're in London, I dread running across him. I try to forget all that dreadful flat business. I often wonder whether it hurts Chalfont to know that I lived—like that. Do you know, to-night—just before I came up to you—he saw something about it in an old scribbling book of mine. I would have given anything if he hadn't."

Alexandra reached up and pressed one of her hands.

"Poor Maggy!" she murmured.

Maggy went on brushing her hair in silence. After a while, she threw off her depression.

"You look awfully sweet, Lexie—like that. Just like a bud that's going to bloom. I could have jumped for joy on the station platform when I knew. Are you tremendously glad?"

"Yes, I think so. But I should have been quite content to remain as I was. I'm afraid."

Instantly Maggy's arms went round her.

"Buck up, Lexie! When it's all over, you'll feel like a child who's afraid of the dark until some one lights the room up. I know. Now pop into bed. Is your hot-water bottle warm enough? Are you comfy?"

She stopped in the middle of tucking her friend up.

"Oh, Lexie," she said with a catch in her voice, "you can't think how I want one! You will have a baby—two perhaps—and you'll love them enormously! And you'll leave them to a good, wise nurse, and you'll see them several times a day, but hardly ever at night. And if you hadn't been going to have one at all, you wouldn't have minded very much! Isn't that so?"

"In a way, I expect it is," Alexandra admitted. "My husband fills up my life. I'm always thinking about his career and planning things for him. Why, how do you feel? What sort of a mother would you be?"

"What sort? A jolly bad one, I expect. Only I should love and love and love my baby until I burst! I should hate to let any other woman touch it, unless it was a friend like you. Oh, to hold its little feet in one hand! To feel its little warm, tickly hands groping about me! Oh, God! I'm aching, Lexie! Let's talk of something else."

She jumped into the bed alongside. She had purposely put Alexandra into that room because there were two beds in it.

"Shall I switch off the light?" she asked.

"Yes, if you like."

Maggy did so. The two girls lay in the darkness. Instantly, their minds reverted to the days and nights when they had shared a single room. They were back in their shabby London lodging, recalling all its associations.

"Where are we?" came Maggy's voice.

"In Sidey Street," said Alexandra.

"No, we're not. My bed is too comfortable."

Maggy turned and flung about in hers.

"Mine used to creak dreadfully. Do you remember? I used to lie in it till parts of me went to sleep because I didn't want to turn over and wake you up. It was just like starting a motor car to move in that bed. The iron things under the mattress made noises like gears being changed. If you sneezed, it back-fired. Yours was a feather bed—or supposed to be—and not so bad."

"Yes, one feather!" said Alexandra ironically. "What I hated so was the oilcloth in cold weather."

"Ugh!" went Maggy.

"All that's finished, thank goodness!" Alexandra sighed contentedly. "We're lucky to be out of it all."

"You mean I am. It's nothing wonderful for you to be married and happy ever after. You're the sort. But me! My marriage was a miracle!"

"I've got as much reason to thank God for my husband as you can have for yours. I do every night," said Alexandra.

"I do every day, as well, for mine," said Maggy.

"I don't often think about the old life. I'm too happy." Alexandra yawned sleepily.

There was a short silence.

"I can't forget," said Maggy abruptly. "There's a picture I've seen somewhere of a great big hand stretching out of the clouds and closing on a little struggling pygmy. I have an awful feeling sometimes that there's a hand waiting to pounce on me like that. It comes of being *too* happy and knowing it can't last because you don't deserve it. I feel like that now. Do you mind if I turn on the light to make sure we're not really in Sidey—Oh, she's asleep!"

Maggy settled her head into the pil-

lows and closed her eyes. But she could not sleep. Her mind was on the stretch. Lexie's arrival, together with hours of talk about the past, had overstimulated it. She was full of fancies. Night and the darkness brought on a morbid phase. She could not get Sidey Street out of her head. The adjacent bed and Alexandra's peaceful breathing helped the illusion. She heard again the drunken brawling in the roadway far below, the startling shouts, the noisy traffic.

Chalfont woke up suddenly. Some one had touched his arm. He groped for the electric switch. The light revealed Maggy in her dressing gown. She looked scared, not quite awake.

"Chalfont," she whispered fearfully, "I've had a nightmare! It was through talking too much to Lexie of old times, I expect. I dreamed I was on the stage again and that you were lost to me! I was acting, acting while my heart was breaking! And I woke up and turned over and dreamed it again. Take me in your arms and tell me it can't happen!"

Chalfont held her to him. To his dismay, she began shaking with sobs.

"My darling, what is it?" he asked tenderly.

She clung to him. Her teeth were chattering.

"Promise me it can't happen!" she cried hysterically.

He did his best to comfort her.

"Of course it can't happen, sweetheart. How could it? You're here for good."

The words had an instantly soothing effect on her.

"For good!" she repeated like a child. "For good! Oh, my dear, always think that!"

And like a child, even as swiftly, she drafted into tranquil slumber in his arms.

CHAPTER VI.

Lancing fell into step beside Joan Faning.

"I'm coming with you," he asserted.

Joan accepted the statement and his escort in a matter-of-fact way. She was extremely pretty and, since she had grown up, accustomed to being made much of by all the men she knew. She was a nice little thing, for all that, only superficially conceited and still very much of a child.

"But you don't know where I'm going," she said.

"Oh, yes, I do. You're going to see Maggy. We're expecting you. We made cakes for tea this morning on purpose. At least, Maggy did. I dropped the currants in. Dashed funny thing, too. They all went to the bottom and made a sort of base for the cake to stand on."

"Does Lady Chalfont cook?" asked Joan in amazement.

"Well, if you like to call it cooking. Anyway, she has an electric stove and a frying pan and a lot of aluminum things. Don't you remember, when we were kids, what joy we used to get out of a toy cooking range? It's rather like that. Maggy can make you feel like three and a half if she likes."

Joan gave him a sidelong glance.

"I see! You're in love with her," she observed astutely, and expected to be immediately contradicted.

"Rather! Of course I am! Everybody is. You will be!"

Joan retorted with a superior tilt of her eyebrows. It did not disconcert Lancing. He thought it added expression to her face.

"How is it mamma isn't with you?" he inquired with a little surprise. It was not from any partiality for Mrs. Faning that he asked the question, but because her usual dragonlike propensity for accompanying Joan everywhere was for once in abeyance.

"She wants me to see Lady Chalfont alone. We're going to talk over something important." Joan thought this a good opportunity for administering a snub. "Can't you come another day?"

"Oh, don't bother about me," said Lancing airily. "I drift in and out. I'm at home at Maggy's. 'Fraid you won't get her to yourself to-day, though. She's got a friend and Mrs. Pardiston staying with her."

"What a nuisance!"

"Why?"

"Because she's going to help me to get on the stage."

An expression of utter incredulity came into Lancing's face.

"Oh, come, I say!" he exclaimed. "You're joking. I'm sure she wouldn't do that. She hasn't any idea how in —"

"How what?"

"Nothing. Well, wait and see what she says."

"All right," said Joan, confident in her superior information derived from her overconfident mother. "I hope she'll like the look of me. I'm not sure she will, though, in this dress. Mother made me put it on. I think it's horrid."

The dress was more suited for an afternoon call in Grosvenor Square than an informal one in the country.

"It is rather Sunday-go-to-meeting-ish," agreed Lancing. "But Maggy doesn't care a hang about dress. Anything does for her. She followed beagles once in a shot-silk skirt and a white lace petticoat and high heels." He laughed. "Lord! You should have seen her! But that was months ago. Now she sticks to tweeds. Here we are."

They were approaching a French window that stood open. Through it Joan had a glimpse of Maggy and a laden, but disarranged tea table. Lancing motioned her to enter, but she hung back shyly.

"Oh, rot!" he said, and pushed her in.

Maggy jumped up. It seemed unbelievable to her that Mrs. Fanning could have a daughter like this. Maggy herself was lovely, Alexandra was pretty, but Joan! Joan was perfect! She suggested a Chelsea figure that ought to be in a china cabinet behind glass doors for safety.

Impulsive as usual, Maggy ran to meet her, put her hands on her shoulders, and kissed her.

"So glad you've come!" she said. "But you're late! The others have had tea, so we shan't be interrupted in our talk. Lancing, I didn't expect you. No, you can't have any tea. There are only two clean cups. Chalfont's going to take the dogs for a run. You'll just catch him if you're quick."

He grumbled, waved away, and went off, promising to return in time to see Joan home.

Joan's shyness did not abate. Just as Maggy had been dazzled by her exquisite prettiness, so Joan was carried away by Maggy's looks and manner. She had hardly got beyond the age at which girls form sudden adoring attachments. The propensity began to seethe in her. She thought Maggy wonderful, and was horribly afraid she would never be able to recite François Coppée's "Butterflies," which she had been rehearsing all the afternoon.

"It's awfully kind of you to see me," she stammered in an access of modesty.

"Nonsense!" said Maggy. "I promised your mother I would, and now that I've seen you, I'll do anything I can for you. I like people at once or not at all. Don't you? You give me a little-sister sort of feeling. So, after you've told me things, I'll be most awfully truthful." She gave Joan tea. "Do you really want to go on the stage? Why?"

"I want to see my photographs in

all the illustrated papers," answered Joan with childish candor.

It struck Maggy as an extraordinary form of ambition.

"Much better get a few looking-glasses, instead," she suggested with a smile. "They would do you far more justice. Don't you know you can get photographed and illustrated without going on the stage?"

"Oh, but I want to go on the stage, too. I love acting. I want to be a great success." Joan took courage. "Last Christmas I was the princess in the fairy play we had in the school-room, and they simply wouldn't let me off the stage! Esmé Hubbard's sister-in-law says I'm quite wasted down here."

In her mind Maggy decided that Esmé Hubbard's sister-in-law ought to have her mouth sewn up.

"What did she say?" she inquired curiously.

"She promised that when I do go up to London and get on the stage, she will introduce me to Esmé Hubbard herself."

This was too much for Maggy.

"She shan't do anything of the sort!" she positively asserted. "Don't be angry with me for saying that. You don't know Esmé Hubbard, and I do. She—she's not what you think she is, and no decent girl ought to be allowed near her. How could she?" she demanded vehemently. "Well, what else have you done toward getting on the stage? No, don't take the bottom cake. It's one of the lot Lancing and I made. It's punctured or something."

Joan made another selection.

"I wrote to Sir Patrick Wile," she said. "I asked him to see me and hear me recite."

"Good Lord! Why Sir Patrick Wile?"

"Because he has a kind face."

Maggy was tongue-tied. Never in her life had she encountered such un-

sophisticated simplicity. Sir Patrick Wile! Because he had a kind face! The actor manager who changed his leading lady as often as he changed a soiled pair of gloves, and for the same reason!

"And because he must be quite fifty," continued Joan, "although he plays young men's parts. I thought he might feel inclined to help me in a fatherly sort of way. There's nothing wrong in writing to an old man like that, is there? You're not shocked?"

"No—I'm not shocked," said Maggy. "Does your mother know you wrote?"

"Oh, yes."

Maggy tried hard to believe that Mrs. Faning could not be aware of Sir Patrick Wile's reputation. And yet it was notorious. Quite recently he had figured in a particularly flagrant divorce case. She must have read about it. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Faning never missed the newspaper reports of divorce cases. She considered it a duty to read—and enjoy—them before cutting them out so that Joan's mind should not be contaminated by them.

By this time Maggy had made up her mind how to deal with Joan.

"If he answers your letter, you mustn't go and see him," she asserted. "If anything, he's worse than Esmé Hubbard. If I were you, I shouldn't ask men for help. You're too pretty."

Joan did a little deliberating.

"If I'm pretty, isn't that a help?" she propounded seriously.

"Oh, yes," laughed Maggy. "Everybody is ready to help a pretty girl. Men, I mean. Not women. On the stage, every woman's hand is against every other woman better looking than herself. So is her tongue. Women will want to scratch you, and men will want to——" She came to a discreet stop.

"What will men want?"

Maggy looked out of the window.

"You're out of the schoolroom," she

said. "You know what it is to be in love, I suppose, or you've heard of it."

"You mean men will fall in love with me and want to marry me?" said Joan artlessly.

"I mean the first half," said Maggy.

"But they wouldn't be in love if they didn't want to marry me. You can't love without marrying, unless there are insuperable barriers which keep a girl and a man apart."

Joan was arguing from the sentimental standpoint of the innocuous novels which her mother permitted her to read. Of the realities of life and love she knew no more than she did of the unrealities of the stage.

"Oh, goodness!" ejaculated Maggy. "Look here, kiddie, if I gave you a real, rattling good time—took you up to London to dances and theaters—would you be able to forget all your hankerings for the stage? I'd far rather do that. I'd like to," she added eagerly, her mothering instinct coming to the fore.

But Joan was not so easily deflected from her purpose. She had a touch of her mother's tenacity.

"That's very kind of you," she replied, "and I expect I'm silly not to jump at it, but I really do want to go on the stage more than anything in the world."

To Maggy's mind this was sheer madness—the madness of ignorance. She had heard Alexandra talk like that once. It had been impossible to argue with her. All amateurs were alike. She gave it up.

"Go and stand over there and say your little piece," she smiled.

Joan was accustomed to recite in drawing-rooms. She took up a central position, directed her eyes at a spot on the wall a few feet above Maggy's head, and spoke the four short verses. When they came to an end, all Maggy said was:

"Can you sing?"

Joan did not think she could sing, but she went to the piano and did her best. Then she waited in trepidation for Maggy's opinion of her elocution and voice, hoping she would help her.

"Now, hold tight," said Maggy. "I'm going to tell you the brutal truth, because it's best for you, and no one else will. And if you hate me for it, you're not the nice kiddie I'm sure you are. But first just remember this: I've nothing to gain by telling you what I really think. I couldn't be jealous if you got on, for the simple reason that I'm out of it. You can't act—not serious stuff. I don't believe it's in you. Don't cry. It's something to be glad for, if you only knew. But your gestures are pretty and your voice is sweet. If you go on the stage—and you seem bent on it—one of two things will happen to you if you stick to it. In about four years you'll either be feeling as blue as the butterflies in that poem, or else you'll be star girl at the Pall Mall Theater."

Joan looked hypnotized.

"If I were to take you to De Freyre," Maggy went on, "he'd see your possibilities at once. He'd put you in the chorus for the run of a couple of plays, to get you used to the stage—and other things. And he'd have you taught singing and fake dancing. Then all of a sudden, when the right moment came, he'd launch you out, have you photographed and interviewed and placard you and pull wires for you—and you'd get there. But there's the other side. If you got black—broken, I mean—your wings smashed, pulled off—"

"But—but if you will help me," Joan began again, "if you would take me to Mr. De Freyre yourself—"

Maggy interrupted her, with seeming inconsequence:

"You know a girl in the village—Rose Hale?"

"Yes. Why?"

"You know that people in the place

are being nasty to her, and that she's in awful trouble?"

"I know she's bad. Mother says so."

"Do you know why she's in trouble?"

"N-o. I've wondered. She was nice, I thought. Now she's had a baby. I suppose she married secretly."

It seemed to Maggy a hopeless task to open the eyes of such staggering innocence to actualities.

"I'm not going to talk any more about the stage, Joan," she said. "At least, not to-day."

Joan was terribly disappointed.

"What shall I tell mother?" she asked.

Maggy did not hesitate.

"Tell her," she said slowly, "or, rather, ask her from me to tell you what Rose Hale did—or what was done to Rose Hale. And tell her from me that there are heaps and heaps of Rose Hales on the stage—and that some of them are clergymen's daughters. Here come the others!" she cried with immense relief, as the sound of voices rose on the other side of the door. Before it opened, her hand shot out and took Joan's.

"Don't be angry with me," she pleaded.

Joan gulped.

CHAPTER VII.

"The Moat is let," said Maggy. "Lexie and I walked past it this morning. There was smoke coming out of the chimneys. I hope they're decent people. I wonder Mrs. Fanning didn't tell me. She's generally full of it."

"It was let through agents," Chalfont answered quietly. "I don't think she knew, herself, until the day before yesterday."

The Moat was a largish, but somewhat dilapidated residence, with overmuch stabling for its size. It belonged to Mrs. Fanning and was part of the Abbott's Piggott property chronicled

in "Burke," which she so constantly advanced as evidence of the social standing of the Hogg family. Unfortunately for her, the house, generally untenanted, had given but a barren title to her gentility.

"Did you see anybody there?" asked Chalfont.

His tone was peculiar. Maggy, walking abreast of him with her eyes straight ahead, was not aware of the anxious scrutiny he was giving her face. It was, moreover, too dark to see distinctly.

"No, only a horse and groom coming out of the stable entrance. The horse was clothed up to the eyes. It looked a thoroughbred, and it walked as if it were waltzing. Isn't it lovely out here? Don't let's go in yet. I feel like Adam and Eve when I'm in the garden with you on a lovely night. Lexie and Mrs. Pardiston don't want us. Mrs. Pardiston is giving Lexie no end of confidential advice, and they like being alone. I'm out of it, you see. I don't belong to the army of mothers, or mothers to be."

Chalfont pressed the arm tucked under his own.

"Don't let that bother you, Maggy," he said.

"Ah, but you'll want a son," she returned gravely. "And I want one. I want to see him toddling about like a little king who owns the world—or, at any rate, this heavenly corner of it." She gave a little wriggle of impatience. "I want to see him here now. I don't want to wait for him. I want to take him to the zoo and ride on an elephant with him and play bears under the table. Oh, look at the moon! Isn't it heavenly? Aren't you glad you're alive and happy? I think it's awful cheek of us to take it for granted that we're entitled to heaven and life everlasting when we die, even if we've been good. Surely it's enough that God has given us this one life, and eyes to see the

world, and ears to hear music, and voices to talk with, and hearts to love with. I'm grateful down to the bottom of my soul! But then He's been extra good to me lately. I used to think beastly things about Him. I hope He's forgiven me. How quiet you are, Chalfont! Are you cold?"

Chalfont said he was not cold.

"I don't see how you could be on a night like this," said Maggy contentedly. "It's like June, though it's only May. Don't the trees look like brides in white veils? I love trees. They're so alive and kind and strong. I read a book about them once. They all had souls and spirits. Some were benign, and others were frightfully malignant. All the trees here are kind, especially the cedars. Let's go and talk to the cedars."

Chalfont followed her. He was unusually silent. He had been preoccupied all day. He had something to tell Maggy he would far rather not; news that it would be better for her to hear from his lips than from those of anybody else. He dreaded telling her. The thing was obnoxious enough to himself. It would mean much more than that to her. At any rate, he had to prepare her, before Joan or Mrs. Fanning or some one else sprang it on her unexpectedly. She would need to be on her guard. He had postponed telling her all day, was loath to do so now.

She had run ahead and was standing under one of the cedars on the lawn, with her arms around it. Her face, turned toward him, was entranced.

"I'm touching wood," she whispered, "because I'm so happy. All this life of mine, now, down here in your beau-

tiful home, is like one long dream of delight. I'm happy from morning till night. I wake up singing and I go to bed singing, and every moment of it is good. Oh, I thank you, thank you for it! Never, never think that I take all you give me for granted! I'm grateful from the bottom of my heart. I would like to be saying 'thank you' all day. I love you, my dear, for all your great kindness. And I worship you because you are such"—words failed her; she ended lamely—"such a nobleman!"

Chalfont was deeply moved. More than ever so because of what he had to say to her. Perhaps it was as well that she had brought him out into the garden she loved. She would bear it better there.

"Maggy—" he said, and stopped, courage failing him.

Not until then did she become aware of something unusual in his tone, something ominous. She looked up. Her fingers still touched wood.

"Yes?" Her voice went staccato. She was all nerves and emotion tonight. Something of Chalfont's suppressed agitation communicated itself to her. "There's something you want to tell me," she said, full of vague fears.

"I've got to tell you, Maggy," he said, steeling himself to firmness. "That man—Woolf is living down here. The Moat, you know—"

Maggy's arms dropped to her sides. In the moonlight Chalfont saw all the color drain from her face. Her form grew tense.

"Oh, God!" she cried in poignant tones. "And I thought You'd let me off!"



Whiter Than Snow

By Justin Huntly McCarthy

Author of "If I Were King," "The Proud Prince," etc.



OUTSIDE Lollia's windows, the piazza of Pavia blazed in the afternoon sun. Inside Lollia's windows, scrupulously curtained, the heat was minished to a dim tranquillity. Lollia was the loveliest lady in Pavia, and her living room was as splendid as her fame and the roll of her adorers merited. But the fair room was empty of Lollia at this fervid hour, for she lay in her sleeping chamber, hoarding her beauty in repose. Only a brace of her women sat in the great room; and one of these was Ipparchia, who was, as it were, my Lady Lollia's lieutenant, as pert and pretty and cunning as you please; and the other was Ipparchia's kinswoman Claudia, newly wafted from the country to serve Lollia under Ipparchia. Claudia carried an unsophisticated rusticity whose hot ambition it was to become in time as pert and cunning as Ipparchia herself. By nature's grace, she was already as pretty, in a different way of prettiness.

Ipparchia was busy with the tuning of a lute, but none so busy that she could not find time to advise her kinswoman.

"Claudia, my kitten," she said, "listen to me with pricked ears if you wish to become a cat."

Claudia tilted eagerly her red head. She came from the Venetian region, where red heads are common. She was supposed to be winding silks, but she was one ear for Ipparchia.

"Indeed I do listen," she said.

"Listening is little wisdom," Ipparchia reasoned, "if it does not learn. It is a great chance for you to come to my Lady Lollia's service"—as she spoke, she threw a glance of deferential admiration toward the life-size portrait of her lady, limned by a great painter, which seemed to command the room and the world from its wall—"and, God knows, if you are wise, you may yet have cardinals in your antechamber, even as she."

"May it please Heaven!" suspired Claudia.

"My Lady Lollia," Ipparchia continued, "was once no less countrified than you, and see her now!" Again she glanced at the glowing portrait. "She came from a farm, and I come from a farm, and you come from a farm. It is my hope to be one day as my lady is now, and it may be your hope no less. But do not be in too much of a hurry, and never, as you value your life, try to steal one of my lady's suitors until she is dog tired of him."

"I should not dare," Claudia asserted with simple veracity.

"Good puss!" Ipparchia approved ironically. "Well, now, I have told you some things, but there remains another. You see yonder picture?"

As she spoke, she pointed to the great portrait, and Claudia, following her finger, stared at it and nodded.

"When you hear three taps at the back of that picture," Ipparchia, continued, "you will go to the gold rose in the side of the frame and press it in the core, and it will open like a door, and you will admit the knocker."

"Who will the knocker be?" Claudia questioned, with widening eyes.

Ipparchia seemed amused to enlighten this vast ignorance.

"Either the Cardinal Bellanni or his brother, the Prince Griffone. All the world in Pavia knows that they are my lady's friends, but there is a public opinion in Pavia which must be respected. So my lord cardinal has bought him a little mean house in a little mean street that backs on our big, proud house on the big, proud piazza, and the noble pair come and go at their ease. Now you have the trick of the picture, and I have the trick of this lute; so hold your peace while I sing."

Straightway she lilted to a tinkling tune:

"Young Grandsire Adam, garlanded with
flowers
Traveled atiptoe through the jasmine bow-
ers,
To a bird-haunted brake
Wherein a lady lay
Fairer than night or day——"

At this point in the song there came three taps on the wall behind the great portrait. In spite of her forewarning, Claudia started in surprise.

"Some one is knocking!" she cried.

Ipparchia made a little grimace.

"Let him in, fool," she commanded, and renewed her tune.

Claudia ran to the picture and fumbled at the core of the golden rose. The picture swung slowly forward, as if the loveliness of Lollia were entering her own apartment. Out of the darkness behind the portrait appeared the Prince Griffone, young, handsome, dazzling, the model of all fashion in Pavia. As Ipparchia was still singing, he

paused, as the picture swung back to its place, and made her a friendly gesture to continue. Ipparchia, obeying, sang on:

"Who, half asleep and half awake,
Wooded him with languor-lidded eyes,
And he cried out: 'This land is paradise!
I am Lord Adam—you are Lady Eve.'
Then she: 'Nay, you mistake
In this your make-believe.
I am the snake.'"

As Ipparchia sighed into silence, the young prince applauded her. Ipparchia made him a reverence.

"I do but mumble a tune," she said, "while my mistress reposes."

"I pray you warn her," Griffone beseeched, "that I wait in all humbleness upon her pleasure."

Ipparchia turned to Claudia, who stood staring at the young prince as if she beheld an archangel.

"Child," she bade, "tell my lady that Prince Griffone is here."

As Claudia vanished from the room, Ipparchia turned to Griffone with a dubious smile.

"I am not sure that she will thank me for troubling her, for all that you are the grand duke's son."

"She will not be vexed," Griffone assured her.

Ipparchia quirked her eyebrows as she questioned:

"Gold?"

Griffone shook his fair head that looked like a painted angel's, though he was not angelic.

"Better."

Ipparchia now knitted her eyebrows as she asked again:

"Jewels?"

Again Griffone gave her the nay:

"Better."

Ipparchia looked at him like one that is put out of all patience.

"What in the world can be better than gold or jewels?"

Griffone fanned the air with his delicate, cruel fingers.

"You will learn when my lady comes," he promised, and in that instant, Ipparchia whispered: "Here she comes."

A pair of white hands so finely shaped that few of those who kissed them would have believed that they had ever tilled in the vineyard flung the curtains aside, and Lollia entered the room.

Well might her poets hail her as "La Bellezza," as if to her and to no other woman the title of incarnate beauty belonged! Well might the painters and sculptors who strove to repeat her loveliness proclaim their unattainable desire! She was no longer a girl, but her eyes seemed to shine and her cheeks to glow with the youth of the world. Even a woman, looking at her, would forget the splendor of her garments in the splendor of her face. Now that splendor was shadowed by the semblance of a frown as she addressed Griffone.

"Why are you such a devil of impatience? I have scarce had time for my hair."

Ipparchia discreetly disappeared from the room. The delicate, cruel fingers of Griffone swayed in protest.

"I have brought you a gift which I think you will find worthy even of your altar."

Lollia dropped into a great chair, with her gorgeous gown billowing about her.

"What do you want of me?" she asked coldly.

"That I will tell you," Griffone answered, "when you have taken my present."

"If I take it," Lollia answered more coldly still. It was one of the secrets of her sway to be imperious and aloof.

Griffone laughed.

"I think you will take it when you see it."

He drew, as he spoke, a small object from his bosom, wrapped in cloth of

gold. He removed the wrapping and disclosed a bronze image.

"Here," he said, "is a toy that I had of a Greek merchant. It was found in Athens and is of the finest time of their art. It represents Diana in her slim beauty, short-kirtled for the chase. Is it not fair?"

Lollia, leaning forward in her chair, snatched at the image with a feverish impatience that was tempered by reverence for so exquisite a gift. She positively gasped for joy at the sight of the perfect thing.

"Gods, how beautiful!" she cried.

Griffone smiled at his little triumph.

"It is worthy," he said, "of the loveliness that deigns to touch it."

Lollia grinned at him through narrowed lids.

"Most sweet prince, what am I to do in return?"

Griffone was brisk to explain.

"You have heard of the mad and meddling priest who calls himself Brother Hieronymo?"

"I have heard something," Lollia admitted; "all dull and trumpery. He denounces wealth, he denounces pleasure, he denounces all delight. Surely he does not seek my friendship!"

"That is what I hope he may do," Griffone said with an evil smile. "You speak of him with a yawning lightness, but I tell you that he is a danger to the state."

"A brawling priest," Lollia commented disdainfully.

Griffone took her up sharply.

"He may be a brawling priest, but he is blessed or damned with a cunning tongue. He proclaims himself the apostle of the Florentine madman, Savonarola. His voice is as strong as wine on the weak wits of the populace, and the intoxication spreads to their betters. We are, it seems, to abjure all joy of life, beauty in color, beauty in marble, beauty in woman. All that we cherish must perish; we

must fast and go sadly, and leave the apple of desire without a bite in its smooth cheek."

"What a vile philosophy!" Lollia said, and shuddered.

Griffone went on:

"It sounds like madness, yet it spreads like the plague. In every open place in the city, you may see the flame and smell the smoke of bonfires, fires of sacrifice on which the poor, the middle, and the rich—for all are affected—cast the possessions they hold most dear. It is a delirium of self-denial. Neighbor vies with neighbor in begging himself. And Brother Hieronymo watches it all with a white face in a black hood."

Lollia made a little face of disgust.

"I go little abroad," she said, "and have heard no more than the buzz of his name. If he vexes you, why do you not have his throat slit?"

"That were easy and pleasing," Griffone agreed, "but unwise. The fools he lashes love him, and if he were killed, my father, the grand duke, and my brother, the cardinal, and your poor servant present would be credited with the deed. Here in Pavia the thrones of princes are so nicely poised that a greasy gust of popular breath might overthrow them. No, I would have the people themselves destroy their idol."

Lollia stared at him, wondering.

"How may that miracle be accomplished?"

"That," said Griffone suavely, "is what I come hither to expound. I want you to help me."

The wonder grew on Lollia's face.

"How can I help you?"

"Listen!" Griffone whispered. "When he comes here——"

Lollia interrupted him, almost starting from her chair in her amazement.

"How?" she cried. "When he comes here?"

"Forgive," Griffone entreated politely. "I go too fast. I have sent

this ranter a message by a sure hand, purporting to come from a woman in the side street, entreating him to visit her to-day, as she is concerned for her sinful life. He will be led to you by the secret way. It should be easy for you to kindle such a fire in him as must burn up his austerity. My cardinal brother and I will surprise you together, and then the Church will make a short way with him."

"How if he prove invincible?" Lollia questioned, but she did not speak with conviction.

"I cannot believe such a possibility," Griffone protested, "but the good cardinal is more cautious. He will have it——"

At this moment Griffone was interrupted by the sound of three taps behind the picture.

"Listen! I hear him. Let him speak for himself."

He went toward the picture and set the secret door aswing. A man in a sanguine habit entered the room. It was the Cardinal Bellanni, a handsome, florid man animal, some twelve years older than Griffone, but, with the best will in the world, no wicked. He was jowlish and obese from indulgence, but his smiling face inspired terror, and he moved with the dignity of an emperor.

Lollia sprang from her seat and dropped, a lovely huddle of rose and gold, at the feet of the newcomer.

"Your blessing, holiness!" she begged, and sought to capture the hand with the ring.

But the cardinal was too quick for her. He caught her in his arms and lifted her from the ground.

"On your mouth, loveliness!" he cried and kissed her briskly. Then he released her and, seating himself, glanced from the youth to the girl. "Well, sweeting," he asked in a mellow voice that suggested ancient wines, "has Griffone advised you?"

"Aye," Lollia answered, "but I say

that he may wager too greatly upon me."

The cardinal nodded thoughtfully.

"To parry that hazard," he said, "Griffone and I will lurk behind your curtain yonder. There we will listen, and if you do not persuade him to speak as we wish, why, we will write words for him which you will swear he spoke to you, and we will swear we overheard."

The great man slowly rubbed his fat white hands together, gratified at his plan, but Lollia eyed him dubiously.

"Will they believe us?"

Griffone hastened to assure her.

"The people will believe anything, so it is unbelievable."

"True," Lollia smiled. "When does your conjurer come?"

"I think he is close at hand," replied Griffone. "Do you hear that humming and buzzing in the street? The fanatic is at hand. Look out and see him."

The prince led Lollia to a window and, drawing back the curtain a little, afforded her a peephole upon the piazza below. She saw the great place flooded with a tide of men and women that flowed up to the steps of the church of Santo Martino and there parted, making a living lane. And along this lane toward the church, a man walked, a man in a monk's black habit, his pale face clear to see because of his cast-back cowl. The monk's face was sealed with the seal of greatness. Its strong features were cast in a commanding mold, and while its extreme pallor told of vigil and of labor, it bore the expression of one that was inspired and that could deliver inspiration.

Now, when Lollia saw that face, she gave a little fierce cry and gripped so tight upon Griffone's arm that she hurt him. And the man below mounted the steps of the church and turned and faced the people. Lollia stepped back

into the room, dragging Griffone with her.

"Is that Brother Hieronymo?" she gasped.

"That is the man," Griffone answered, rubbing his arm where Lollia's grasp had chafed it. "That is the rascal. That is the ass."

"The sight of him seems to stir you," the cardinal commented.

"It does," Lollia said slowly. "I knew him well years ago."

"How and where?" Griffone questioned eagerly.

"In the village of my youth," Lollia replied, in the strange voice of one who speaks in a dream. "I sighed for him, cried for him, all to no purpose. I am what I am because he would have none of me."

"Win him now," Griffone urged, "to revenge your past and to gratify your present."

The cardinal spoke impatiently:

"Tell me what the knave is saying."

Lollia stepped to the open window and looked and listened, concealed behind the curtain.

"He is bidding them sacrifice everything to the glory of God," she said. "He is giving them his blessing, and they kneel before him as if he were the very pope. Now he goes into the church, and the crowd is dispersing."

"He has gone," said the cardinal with a sneer, "to put up a prayer before he strives with sin. We may expect him here instantly. Where is the young woman?"

Lollia clapped her hands, and Ipparchia came through the curtains from her mistress' bedchamber. Griffone addressed her.

"Winsome minion, go through the secret way and wait at the door in the side street. If, in your passage, you chance to catch a glimpse of steel behind a door or curtain, do not be troubled. It is but my brother's men that guard his sacred person. When you

hear a knock, admit Brother Hieronymo and conduct him here."

Ipparchia sped on her errand as Griffone turned to the cardinal.

"Now, brother," he said, "it is time for us to seek our lair and spread our snare."

The pair took each a white hand of Lollia and kissed it devoutly. Griffone drew from his bosom a roll of paper and took ink and a quill from a side table. Then he and his brother passed into the adjoining room and the curtains closed behind them. Lollia was left standing alone, with a strange look on her face.

Not for long.

There came a tap behind the portrait. Lollia pressed the spring and, as the picture moved, she stood so that she was concealed by it from any one entering the room by that way. Ipparchia came through the opening, followed by the monk Hieronymo. He looked about him in sudden surprise at the splendor of the place.

"How is this?" he asked. "I come through a poor house to a proud room. Where is your mistress?"

Lollia let the picture glide back into its place and moved a little forward.

"Let her speak for herself," she said, and at the sound of her voice, the monk swung around and faced her.

Ipparchia slipped through the hanging into the room where the conspirators were concealed. Lollia sank on her knees before her visitor.

"Your blessing, holiness!" she begged.

The stern white face of the monk looked down upon her in wonder.

"Rise," he commanded, and as she obeyed, he asked, "Was it you who sent for me?"

Lollia extended her arms in gay assertion of her loveliness.

"Surely I sent for you. When all our city is sick and you its only physician, shall I be left out in the cold?"

A frown shadowed the austere face of the monk.

"Who are you?" he questioned sharply.

Lollia smiled.

"Any man in Pavia would tell you that I am Lollia the beautiful. You should give me another name, Basilio."

As she uttered the last word, she watched the monk's face closely. She read surprise there, but not recognition.

"You know my old name," he said.

"Have I seen you before?"

There was anger in Lollia's heart, but not in her voice, as she answered:

"Have you forgotten old Giuseppe's daughter and the olive garden on the hill?"

Hieronymo stared into the radiant face.

"Are you Anita?" he asked, and when Lollia nodded gayly, he shook his head sadly and sighed.

"How have you fallen thus?"

Lollia's laugh was a blithe challenge to the reproof of the monk.

"Do you call it fallen, young wisdom? I was ragged and foul and hungry and thirsty, and Giuseppe whipped me when he had a mind to be peevish. Now I go in cloth of gold, and my body is white with the finest essences, and see the beautiful gifts that my suitors give!"

She picked up, as she spoke, the gift of Griffone, and offered it to the monk, but Hieronymo raised a checking hand with an imperiousness that stayed her.

"I did not come hither to see toys," he said gravely. "I came to save a soul."

Lollia swayed a little nearer to him, moving in an atmosphere of delicate odors diffused from her draperies.

"Why should you think I sought you for my salvation? I do not know that I have a soul, but I know that I have a body which holds a heart. Feel how it beats!"

She snatched at his hand, as she

spoke, and drew it toward her, pressing it against her side. He could feel the warmth of her flesh through the thin stuff and the pulsations of her heart. He plucked his hand sharply away from her clasp.

"I am no physician for the ills of life," he said sternly. "I strive only with the ills of the spirit. Have you a desire to quit your evil life?"

"Gods, no!" Lollia protested. "So you would convert me! Why should not the shoe be on the other foot? Why should not I convert you?"

"I am too busy for silliness," the monk said. "If you have no more to say to me, I will go my way."

Lollia sank lazily into a great chair and eyed him curiously.

"Why must you of necessity be right and I of necessity be wrong?" she questioned.

"I speak with the voice of God," Hieronymo answered simply.

Lollia fluttered the plumage of a vast fan.

"You say so, but can you make me believe you? I would have you to know that I follow the wise Epicurus, who denied the gods, or at least their concern for men, and bids us seek pleasure as the end of life."

Hieronymo looked with a steadfast face upon the beautiful she-pagan.

"I have read enough of the ancients," he said dryly, "to know that you slander your philosopher."

Lollia appealed with extended hands and tilted head.

"As you will. Say that I amend him, extend him."

"Cease to babble," the monk said earnestly. "Pan is dead this long while, and our Lord Christ Jesus rules the world. I am but a poor janitor at the door of His house, but in His name I bid you enter and do well."

Lollia leaned back and fanned herself languidly, while her eyes mocked the missionary.

"I do well as I am," she simpered.

The monk strode toward her and stood over her, his pale face menacing.

"You fool!" he cried. "You poor, painted doll of ignorance and sin, do you not, in the mesh of your fleshliness, understand that an hour must strike when your beauty will wither like a waning rose, when men will shudder as they pass you by, with your bleared eyes and your creaking fingers and your spotted skin and your toothless, unmissable mouth?"

Lollia swung herself forward and struck at him with her fan.

"Silence, beast!" she screamed, and then swayed backward, biting her lips to keep from sobbing at the picture of herself.

Hieronymo went on, unheeding her interruption:

"Then you will beseech the pity, the forgiveness, you now deride, and both may be denied you. The gorge of hell gapes for ancient sin. How much nobler to fling your fresh beauty upon the altar of the living God!"

"Why do you speak of my beauty," Lollia said petulantly, "if you hold it so cheap?"

The stern gaze of the monk softened a little. His voice was milder.

"Do you think me dull to your beauty? Do you think me dead to desires, to the sweet of meat or the glory of wine or the soothings of the flesh? No, no, I should be the slave of these passions but for the voice of the Lord, which tells me of a higher pride in denying these delights. Everything of pleasant or fair that one renounces brings one nearer to heaven, leads one farther from hell."

Lollia looked up at him, tempting, extending her hands.

"Oh, Basilio, Basilio," she murmured, "what a stupid fellow you are! When you were a lad, you missed felicity. We might have been happy on our hill."

"I am happy in unhappiness," Hieronymo answered. "There is the law for all Christian souls."

"At least, Basilio," she pleaded, "listen to my speech if I listen to yours. I loved you long ago. Maybe I love you still. Preach what you please to others, but cannot you and I find comfort in the sweet mystery of a secret understanding?"

She had risen while she spoke, and now suddenly she flung herself upon him, folding her arms about his neck, thrusting her eager face close to his. Surely the man was not made, she told herself, who could resist her.

But the monk was not moved even to anger. Quietly he detached her arms from about his neck, quietly he set her back in her seat as easily as if she had been a froward child.

"Do you think," he asked calmly, "that I have never considered the possibility of temptation? When I marched in the war of God, I weighed all the chances. If I preach renunciation with Isaiah's words of flame, it is because I know what it is to renounce. Come from this place with me in the name of the Blessed Trinity, for I see the fires of hell about your feet."

"You had no pity on the girl I was," Lollia answered passionately. "Will you have no pity on me?"

Again she made to cast herself into his arms and again he repulsed her.

"God have pity on you," he said sadly, "for I think you have need of pity."

Lollia, her whole being aflame with rage and humiliation, drew away from him. There was some feeling tearing at her heart that she did not understand. But she thrust it from her and, pointing her finger at the monk, she burst into a mocking laugh. The silken curtains parted, and Griffone and the cardinal came into the room. While the cardinal hurried to the window, Griffone saluted Hieronymo derisively.

"You are undone, master monk," he said, and laughed.

Hieronymo showed no sign of alarm or even of surprise. He only asked gravely:

"Why are you here?"

"That my brother will tell you," Griffone answered, and as he spoke, the cardinal, leaning forth from the open window, called aloud in a great voice:

"People of Pavia, you are betrayed by a false priest! Ascend and see how Brother Hieronymo spends his leisure!"

"How better could I spend my leisure?" Hieronymo commented quietly, with his eyes fixed on the flaming face of Lollia, while the cardinal continued to shout until there was soon a great crowd gathered below to gape at the scarlet figure and to marvel at what he said.

Very soon a number of these obeyed the cardinal's invitation, and those that waited in Lollia's room could hear the drumming of their feet upon the stairs. Then the great door of the room was thrust open, and a motley crowd surged in and huddled together about the door out of respect to the cardinal and the young prince and the monk Hieronymo. They gaped and glared, while the cardinal, pointing a jeweled finger at Hieronymo, accused him to their faces.

"People of Pavia," he said, "there is the man you have been fools enough to worship, run to earth by us in this woman's house!"

A murmur of amazement and indignation stirred the crowd. A man elbowed and ordered his way through the throng about the door and came to the front, a person of importance in a furred gown. He was the syndic of the town. Brother Hieronymo regarded them all gravely over folded arms and asked quietly:

"Why should I not be in this house? Magdalen has a soul to save."

Now Griffone came lightly forward.

"Friends," he said, "master monk talks glibly of saving souls, but he came here for evilness. His eminence and I were hidden behind those curtains, and we heard him woo this lady."

The mutterings among the crowd swelled louder. Folk were taken unawares and knew not what to think. Hieronymo answered Griffone contemptuously:

"They will not believe you."

"Will they not?" challenged the cardinal and pulled, as he spoke, a paper from the bosom of his robe. "Here is a writing of the words you spoke, still wet from that pen that trembled to be so evil against its will. Shall I read your words, infamous?"

"You may read any words I said," Hieronymo answered composedly.

The murmuring about the door increased, but the syndic, holding up a hand, commanded silence.

"Here," said the cardinal, holding up the paper, "is what the fellow said," and he began to read: "'Do you think me dull to your beauty? Do you think me dead to desires, to the sweet of meat, the glory of wine, or the soothings of the flesh?'" The cardinal parted his hands in a gesture of horror. "Here are wicked words for a holy man to utter!"

The syndic turned toward Hieronymo and questioned:

"Did you speak those words, brother?"

"I spoke those words," Hieronymo replied calmly, "but not with the sense that the cardinal gives to them. How could I rightly summon others to renounce if I knew not myself the bitter-sweet meaning of renunciation?"

"Thereafter," said Griffone, "he pestered the poor lady with protestations of love."

There came an angry murmur from the crowd, which the syndic silenced with an uplifted hand. Then he advanced to Hieronymo.

"Do you deny this, brother?"

Hieronymo looked at his questioner with a face of grave disdain.

"Why should I deny it? If you are ripe ready to ask, you are rotten ready to believe."

"How can we believe it?" the syndic asked in a voice of horror.

The monk made an impatient gesture.

"If you can believe it, you can believe it. Stand back and let me pass."

But this the syndic was by no means prepared to do. The spirit of Pavia, as represented by him, was shocked at this story and was not to be flouted so.

"No, no," he protested, "you shall not carry it so. You who profess to lead us——"

"I profess nothing but to follow God," Hieronymo interrupted.

The syndic continued.

"You who profess to follow God are proclaimed tainted——"

Again Hieronymo interrupted him.

"Methinks I smell sweet."

At this point, the cardinal turned to Lollia.

"Lady," he said, "did not this follower of God woo you?"

Lollia did not answer him. She turned her gaze on the monk and questioned:

"What shall I say, Basilio?"

The monk turned his passionless face upon the woman, who seemed to shrink a little under his gaze.

"What is there to say? You know and I know and God knows, To me it is all one whether I die now or outlive the century. That is God's business and not mine, and if He finds me worthy to move in heaven, I am not less than blessed. It is for you yourself that I would have you speak truth—for yourself and for your soul that you deny, but that will not be denied."

Again Lollia put her question, but this time there was no mockery in her voice:

"What shall I say, Basilio?"

"The truth," Hieronymo answered firmly. "I tell you, woman, that you are at the parting of the ways. I am the finger that points to the two paths whereof you must needs make choice." He pointed downward and said sternly: "That way lies hell." Then he raised his hand aloft and cried: "This way lies heaven!" His pale face seemed to glow with a white flame as he spoke. "Search your heart swiftly," he commanded. "Remember the days of your innocence and choose, for your soul's sake, the strait and narrow path to paradise. If I to-day make one with the fellowship of Stephen and Peter, I shall be well content if I have won you from the undying worm."

Lollia clenched her hands against her bosom, staring at him, breathing fast. Her eyes wandered wildly from the sensuous face of the cardinal to the evil face of the young prince, and then back to that of the monk. His words were no more than the familiar exhortation of his kind, but his manner and her memories swayed her. The syndic, growing impatient at the delay, addressed himself to Lollia.

"Mistress," he said, "is this thing true?"

Lollia beat her breast and then flung out her arms with a great cry.

"No, no, it is false as Judas! I spread a net for a saint, and these were my master plotters!"

She pointed an accusing hand in turn at each of the princes. The cardinal turned upon her as if he would have struck her and bade her be silent, but the crowd would not suffer this or consent to be restrained, and it yelled its command that Lollia should speak.

"They spied on my enterprise," Lollia went on in a choking voice, "and were to come in whether I won or lost, with their accusation. I lost, for he laughed at my lures and was gentle and pitiful to me, a sinner."

6

Griffone made a wry face.

"Gods, what a fool a woman can be!" he muttered.

He had an eye upon the crowd and, reading danger in what he saw, stepped softly to the picture. He was right in his apprehension. The crowd was moved to fury against the brothers by Lollia's confession. Murmurs and mutterings suddenly resolved themselves into words.

"Death to the woman! Death to Lollia!" they howled.

Lollia stood motionless, with her eyes fixed on the monk's face. There was a surging forward of the crowd, and the cardinal gripped his brother's arm.

"They grow dangerous," he whispered, and as if in answer, a new cry came from the people whom the syndic vainly strove to control:

"Death to the false cardinal! Death to the prince!"

Griffone's pale face looked back contempt at them. With a bound, he reached the picture and touched the spring. The door swung open, he whistled into the darkness, and a number of men entered the room and ranged themselves behind him. The crowd swayed uneasily back, and its murmurings died down. Lollia, who had paid no heed to the threats against herself, turned to Hieronymo, standing an image of tranquillity in all the din.

"Brother," she entreated, "take my wretched life and make it clean!" Fiercely she stripped from her neck and arms and fingers their load of jewels and flung them on the floor at the feet of the monk. "I fling away these emblems of my evil course!" She grasped with both hands at the neck of her gorgeous gown and rent it from her body, remaining only in her smock. "I strip from my limbs these robes of wantonness and cast my sinful body at your feet!" And with these words, she flung herself groveling upon the floor at the feet of Hieronymo.

Most of the crowd were stirred to pity at the sight of the woman's surrender, but there were still some in the background who shrilled their vindictive cry of "Death to the wanton!"

Then Hieronymo spoke.

"No, not death, but life—new life, eternal life. I take this woman from these wicked walls this moment to the convent of the Blessed Peace, there, through repentance and regeneration, to gain redemption."

The syndic made an approving gesture.

"So be it," he said, and motioned to the crowd to make way.

Hieronymo stooped and lifted Lollia from the ground and took her by the hand.

"Come, sister," he said, and led her with bowed head through the lane of parted people and so out of the door.

"Ye gods!" said Griffone. "What a fool a woman can be!"



CHANGELING

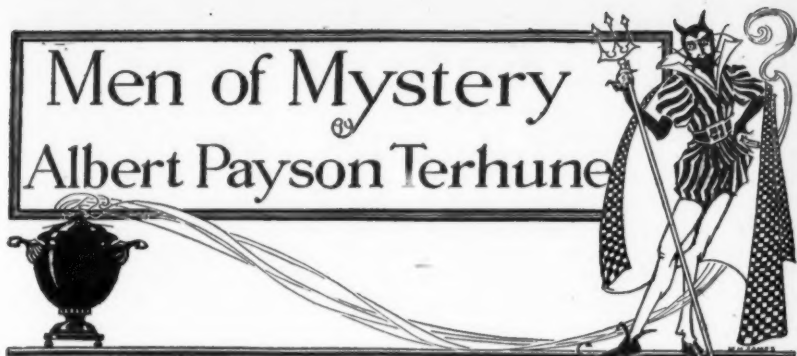
COLD New England—yes, I know,
Place of Puritans and snow,
Frigid, rigid, god-obsessed—
Life to me is flame and jest;
Pagan, I must sing and die;
Yet I love you! This is why:

Once a fairy—some say Pan—
Left a changeling, laughed, and ran;
In your stern arms left a thing
Small and sweet and shy and—spring!
Still its whisper stirs and wakes
Drifted woodlands, ice-chained lakes;
Attic skies smile softly down;
Pussy willow's gray-gold gown
Flirts with April winds that sip
Violet's white and lovely lip;
Hepatica, anemone—
Names that weave Greek charms for me—
Rosy-fingered Mayflowers wait
For lovers. Nothing prim, sedate,
Curbs the wild, seductive grace—
Airs that wanton, brooks that race,
Earth a-flower and wings astir,
Fauns with pointed ears of fur!

MARGUERITE MOOERS MARSHALL.

Men of Mystery

Albert Payson Terhune



The Lost Dauphin

A LITTLE boy—fragile of body, wistful of eye—worked right diligently in a handkerchief-sized garden plot between a wall of the Tuileries Palace in Paris and the high iron railing that divided the palace grounds from the street.

The outer side of the railing was black with people, who swarmed stickily there, like carrion flies on a carcass. Horrible-looking folk they were, these rail clingers—gaunt of face, bloodshot of eye, ragged of garments, men of the slums, women of the *halles* and of the pave—and they growled and mouthed like obscene beasts at feeding time. Feeding time was at hand, too—feeding time that should glut stomachs and souls that had starved for centuries.

The little boy at work in his futile bit of garden patch looked up from the task of hoeing weeds away from his spindling array of plants. Fearlessly and friendlily he gazed at the scowling, gibbering crowd that milled so threateningly against the high iron fence.

He looked at them fearlessly because into his sheltered hothouse life fear had never been allowed to enter. He looked at them friendlily because he

had known nothing but love. Every one had been kind to him and had made much of him since the day of his birth—every one from his fat-witted dolt of a father and his rattle-brained mother down to the street beggars upon whom he had always insisted on lavishing his pocket money and even his jewelry. He no more recognized the crowd's attitude of hatred than an unthrashed puppy recognizes the menace of the dog whip.

Wherefore, he stepped toward the railing and, with an apologetic smile, held out his baby hands, saying:

"Messieurs and mesdames, I am so sorry I can't ask you all to come into my garden and help yourself to flowers, but, you see, there really isn't room enough. And there aren't flowers enough, either."

Mistaking the stage-mob snarl that answered his gracious words, he trotted back to his garden, picked a scarlet rose, and returned to the fence. Shyly he proffered the blossom to a particularly hideous old fishwife, whose skinny and unwashed arms were thrust menacingly between the railings.

The hag flung the flower back into the wondering upraised face.

"Spawn of the filthy Austrian woman!" she cried.

The child, tasting terror for the first time, recoiled from the yell that greeted the fishwife's patriotic deed. He ran sobbing into the palace to ask his mother what it all meant and to be comforted by her for his fright.

Then, all too soon, came a day when the mob—no longer a mere "crowd"—was not content to gibber curses and to shake grimy fists from the far side of a railing. The men and women of underworld and gutter swept aside the palace guards and stormed the Tuileries.

All day long the mob ramped through the palace, looting, smashing, screeching, gloriously insane with the lust of pillage. All day the Tuileries echoed and shook with the thunderous racket.

In the royal apartments, the little boy cowered against his mother, crying and trembling.

At dawn next day, the mob continued its joyous work of plundering. Starting up from a broken sleep, as the din from belowstairs reached him, the child whimpered:

"Oh, mother, isn't yesterday over yet?"

Presently the revolution-drunk citizens of Paris took a further step in their glorious march toward Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. They seized the royal family and bundled them into prison. Preparations were afoot for the final act of the tragedy—the beheading of the dethroned King and Queen of France, and of every courier of theirs who could be found.

Later, when the supply of princes and nobles ran out, the revolutionists kept their hands in by beheading one another. But that crowning point of the Reign of Terror need not come into our story, a story that centers around the little boy in the Tuileries garden—the friendly little boy who once had known nothing but love.

He was Louis Charles, Dauphin (Crown Prince) of France, son and heir of their more or less "Christian" majesties, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

The common people of France were taking their bloody revenge of the folk who had so long ground them into the mud. French kings and French nobility, for hundreds of years, had scourged the poor. The government had buried them under mountains of iniquitous taxes. The nobles had stolen their prettiest daughters; had often beaten their sons to death for resenting such thefts; had posted sick old men at night in marshes to keep the frogs from disturbing the manor lords' sleep by croaking; had perpetrated other and far more unspeakable outrages on the helpless peasantry, besides robbing them of what little money the government did not seize. Life imprisonment and death—without trial—were common penalties for trivial offenses. Torture was an established form of punishment.

By the time Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette came to the throne, the people at large were beginning to realize the truth that Shelley later sang:

Ye are many; they are few!

The long-tormented giant was making ready to rise in fury and destroy the handful of Liliputians who had been torturing him.

Still, there was left a remnant of reverence for royalty, and a sane rulership might have staved off or softened the crash. At this crisis, the new king and queen proceeded to throw away what was left of their chances by a career of idiocy that would have shamed a couple of defective school children. Extravagance, misrule, injustice, were piled high, one upon the other.

And at last the people revolted. They had a long and fearful score to pay,

and they proceeded to pay it in the only coin they knew anything about.

Louis XVI. was brought to trial before a tribunal made up of middle-class Frenchmen and peasants. Even at the hands of these revenge-mad statesmen, he all but escaped death, for the vote was only three hundred and eighty-seven against three hundred and thirty-four for conviction.

Off went the king's—foolish head. Then came his wife's turn, and with it came a new complication. The French were not yet so accustomed to the shedding of royal blood that they would execute their beautiful queen without having plenty of excuse for doing it. The tribunal realized that. It realized, too, how narrowly the revolutionists had succeeded in executing Louis. There must be masses of evidence—evidence of the most damaging kind—if a vote of conviction were to be obtained against Marie Antoinette, and the right men were sent out to collect that evidence.

The French hated Marie Antoinette. They hated her for her Austrian parentage, for her fluff-headed indifference to their sufferings, for the way she threw away the public moneys in extravagance, for her harmfully silly meddling in politics. But more than this was needed if a conviction were to be gained, and one of the first persons to whom the evidence hunters went was the little dauphin.

The child, meantime, had been taken away from his mother and lodged in a dirty cell in the Temple prison. Antoine Simon, a drunken cobbler whose wife did odd jobs—*very* odd, some of them—around the prison, was appointed his jailer.

Simon may have acted on his own sweet inspiration, or he may have had orders from men higher up. Let us hope the latter. That may lessen the heat of the hell in which, otherwise, Simon is probably sizzling for the

blackest sin on all the black list—a sin against childhood.

He made life a horror for the little dauphin. The sensitive, delicate child was beaten, starved, clad in tatters, dragged out to afford Simon's rowdy friends the daily sport of badgering a real live prince. Simon and his cronies would bait the lad, telling him rotten scandals about his adored mother and about his dead father; then roaring with laughter over the little fellow's rage at such calumnies. When his righteous wrath waxed too vehement, they would kick him into a corner and leave him to sob himself to sleep there.

Another sweet diversion of Simon's was to get the youngster drunk and to enjoy his tipsy chatter. He also took innocent pleasure in teaching the dauphin a string of indecent words and verses and choice phrases of blasphemy, and scaring him into spouting them for the jailers and turnkeys who used to hang around Simon's room in the idle evenings.

Altogether, do you think I am over-orthodox in thinking that Simon is probably occupying a *cabinet particulier* in Sheol?

Months of this sort of thing dulled the boy's mind—he was barely ten years old, remember—and made him weak of brain and of will. Even as a blooded dog may sometimes degenerate into a cur, through brutal treatment in early youth, so this baby son of a hundred kings grew stupid and cringing and all but half-witted under Simon's hideous treatment. At last nothing but the lash or the boot toe could rouse him from his vapid lethargy.

Then it was that the evidence collectors sought him out. With Simon's cruel aid, and by drunkenness and threats, they plied the child, and in the end they got the now half-idiotic dauphin to put his shaky signature to a deposition they drew up.

I make no excuse for him. He needs

no excuse. He was no longer himself. And, at worst, his dread of Simon might well have led him to sign any sort of paper, at the beastly jailer's command.

The deposition was duly returned to the court, and there it was submitted as evidence against the luckless queen. I shall not quote its terms. They are too vile for any pen to transcribe. It accused Marie Antoinette not only of a series of normal vices, but of crimes impossible for her to have perpetrated.

Gravely the dauphin's statement was read to a greedily listening assemblage. And it turned the wabby scales of so-called justice dead against the prisoner. Marie Antoinette, largely on the strength of her son's deposition, was condemned to death, and was almost at once beheaded.

The dauphin's statements about his mother were spread broadcast through France as a proof that such a woman had been unfit to live. The royal family—what was left of it—heard them, and instantly repudiated the wretched little liar who was supposed to have originated them. Notably was the dauphin's sister—afterward the Duchesse d'Angoulême—horrified by her brother's contemptible deed. It is said that she never again smiled after reading the deposition.

Simon, you may be sure, did not neglect to tell the boy that his evidence had sent his mother to her death. He also is said to have explained gloatingly the exact meaning of the charges the dauphin had unwittingly made against Marie Antoinette. It was the last straw. The child's mind completely gave way. Henceforth, he was merely an idiot. Simon's task had been fulfilled to perfection. No longer was there a chance that Louis Charles would be fit to reign, in the event of a restoration of the old monarchy. And the things he had said about his mother

had quite severed him from the rest of his family.

True, the few skulking royalists yet hidden in France had spoken of the dauphin as "Louis XVII." as soon as his father was dead, but even these now turned from him in disgust.

The boy was alone, helpless, hopeless, imprisoned, and an idiot. A little later, word went forth from the Temple that he had been found dead one morning in his cell.

During the last weeks of his captivity, he had been confined in a pitch-black dungeon—probably to hasten the end—and food had been passed to him through its bars. He was unwashed, vermin-covered, and famished.

On May 3, 1795, the dauphin was reported dangerously ill. Doctor Dessaux, who had known him from birth, was sent for. Next day Dessaux died so suddenly that a poison charge was vaguely made.

Three days later, the dauphin was reported dead. An autopsy was held. None of its members knew the boy by sight. They cautiously stated that "a child which the commission told us was the late Louis' son" had died of scrofula. On May 10, the boy was buried in St. Marguerite Cemetery, with no stone to mark the spot.

So much for history. The rest is conjecture.

Simon, meantime, had been guillotined. Old keepers had been removed from the prison. No one who had seen the dauphin in life was permitted to look on his dead body; least of all his own sister, who could have identified him at once as her brother or have exposed the fraud.

A rumor immediately ran through all Paris—one of those rumors that no one can confirm or trace, much less silence—that the boy was not dead at all, but had been smuggled out of France, and that a dying peasant child had been put in his cell to impersonate him.

Now for the motive for such a substitution, if indeed it were made.

The revolutionists could not feel themselves safe while the son of the late king lived—or was supposed to live. The royalists would always be likely to rally about him and start an insurrection in his name. The dead King Louis' brother, the Duke of Provence, who was next heir to the throne, was still more anxious to get rid of the boy whose claims were ahead of his own. Both parties thus were anxious to get him out of the way, yet neither dared risk public opinion by putting him openly to death.

His sister, too, did not wear mourning for her allegedly dead brother, although court custom demanded such an act of deference.

From a point of strict law—in a day when such matters were rigidly adhered to—the dauphin's death was never proven.

Richemont, in 1828, declared that Madame Simon—duly bribed—had carried the child out of the Temple in a wash basket, and he offered plausible testimony to back the assertion. He added the tidings that he was the dauphin; this when he was arrested for fraud, in Milan.

Naundorff—Karl Wilhelm Naundorff—in 1810, bobbed up at Berlin with a pretty tale that he himself was the dauphin. And to back it, he told so many incidents of his life in the intervening fifteen years that he found, for a time, a host of supporters. He afterward went to jail as a counterfeiter. Both he and Richemont died in due time, and on the tomb of each was solemnly inscribed the statement that the deceased was none other than the lost dauphin—a manifest impossibility, since the dauphin was not twins.

Not to waste space, let me dispose of the bulk of such claimants in a sentence by saying that not less than forty

adventurers, soon or late, claimed to be the dauphin.

When the Bourbons were restored to the French throne, no attempt was made by them to find the body of the supposedly dead heir to the throne of France, in order to give it decent reburial. Louis XVIII. ordered masses, it is true, for the repose of the souls of such members of the royal family as had died during the revolution, and he carefully specified these victims by name. But the name of the dauphin, strangely enough, was not in the list.

Here is another queer coincidence: Look through copies of the revolutionary police archives, and you will find an official order, dated on the day after the announcement of the dauphin's death, commanding every department of the French police to seek and arrest "on any highroad in France, any and all travelers bearing with them a man child from eight to ten years of age"—as "an escape has been reported of one of the royalists from the Temple."

Now, without going into any of a dozen more corroborating documents, let's get to Eleazar Williams, shan't we?

I have talked to no less than six old people who distinctly remember Williams. His name is still haloed in home-missionary circles. Personally, I believe he was the lost dauphin. Here is his story:

In 1795, two months after the announced death of the dauphin and the frantic warning sent out by the Paris police, a French lady and gentleman appeared at Albany, New York, in charge of two children, a boy and a girl, the boy about eleven years of age, but "disposed to amuse himself after the manner of a child of three years." In other words, the boy was an imbecile.

This boy passed under the name of "Monsieur Louis." The entire party presently left Albany for an unknown

part of the country. A month later, two Frenchmen appeared at Ticonderoga, in charge of a boy answering the description of the one seen in Albany. This boy was left with Indians and was adopted by an Iroquois chief, who called himself by the English name of "Thomas Williams" and who named the lad "Eleazar Williams."

The same Frenchmen afterward visited the Williamses at Lake George, and there followed a touching interview with Eleazar.

All this is a matter of record.

Eleazar Williams grew to early manhood among the Indians, to whom his imbecility rendered him sacred. When he was about twenty, a blow on the head or some other accident jarred him to sanity. He describes this recovery in one of his letters, as follows:

"My first clear remembrance is when I awoke from sleep to find myself among Indians."

He left the tribe, when his mind was fully restored, and was taken in charge by some godly people who lived in the dreamy old village of Longmeadow, just outside of Springfield, Massachusetts.

There an effort was made to pass him off as an Indian who had come to civilization to be educated as a missionary.

"But," writes one chronicler of his own century, "Williams was not an Indian. Everybody who has chanced to meet him is prepared to swear to that fact. All his tendency was toward Europeanism. There was not a sign of Indian blood anywhere. He seemed instinctively to lean toward people of refinement. His deportment in society was almost subconsciously that of one born to command.

"In the words of a mutual acquaintance, 'He looked the man of high birth.'"

Mary Ann Williams, the chief's wife and Eleazar's reputed mother, made an

affidavit that Eleazar was her son. Afterward she swore that certain mysterious French people had visited her and had bribed her to make this statement. She recanted and swore that Eleazar was merely an adopted son of hers, a European, and of parentage unknown to her.

A New Orleans woman, Brown by name—highly respected and of reputation for strict truthfulness—testified under oath that while she was in Europe with her husband, who was secretary to a member of the French royal family, the Duchesse d'Angoulême told her:

"I know my brother is alive and that he is in America."

The duchess, Mrs. Brown affirmed, went on to say that a mental weakness rendered her brother unfit to reign.

All this time, Eleazar Williams, at Longmeadow, was studying to be a missionary to the Indians. Soon the rumor of his parentage and of his romantic fate reached the New England village. A worthy deacon—also a "Williams"—hearing of it, thus accosted him one day in the street:

"Look here, young man, what's this I hear about your being the missing heir to the French throne? You'll either have to drop such nonsense or else you'll have to give up all right to the honored name of 'Williams!'"

Now, Eleazar made no claim, either then or ever. Nevertheless, to the end of his days he believed himself to be the missing dauphin, and though he would take no advantage of this belief, he would not renounce it.

While he was working among the Indians at Green River, Louis Philippe, King of France, sent the Prince de Joinville to America to hunt up Williams and to induce him to sign a paper abandoning his rights to the throne.

The Prince de Joinville entered the presence of the grizzled missionary as if going to an audience with royalty,

and bent low over Williams' hand in salute.

They were closeted together for hours. At the end of the interview, De Joinville backed humbly out of the room. But he backed out minus the desired signature to the paper of renunciation.

Eleazar Williams was well content to devote his whole life to the welfare of his savage flock; to live and die in the missionary service. He had no higher—or lower—ambition. But he honestly believed himself to be the dauphin, and he would not deny that belief at the request of Louis Philippe or any one else.

His clouded intellect had cleared. He was a profound thinker, a man of calm wisdom—which is the one strong argument against his title to Bourbon ancestry—and this same common sense told him he was better off where he was than in a country that had beheaded his father and mother, had dethroned his uncle, and had merrily set the man hunt after others of his kin. But being a Christian and an honest man, he would not sign his name to a lie or renounce his true parentage.

Then, too—so said people who knew him best—his life was darkened by knowledge of the share he had had in his mother's death and of the abominable things he had been made to testify against her. Perhaps his refusal to claim his royal rights may have been a form of penance.

Anyhow, he was no more anxious to be King of France than his French relatives were anxious to have him mount the throne.

Simon, in a fit of drunken fury, had once beaten the little dauphin over the face with a club, leaving two ugly scars, one over the left eye, the other across the nose. Williams bore two such scars to the day of his death.

Here is a description of Williams, penned in 1848—the year that Louis Philippe was kicked off the French throne by his loving subjects:

"He has the bearing of one born to rule—an elusive *something* which I have noted only in persons of lofty ancestry. His forehead is high and intellectual, but receding. His nose is aquiline and not large. He has the true long lip of the Austrian monarchs, the fleshy cheeks and hazel eyes of the Bourbons, and an expression which, in repose, is exceeding sweet. His dark hair, flecked with gray, is as fine as silk."

A traveler at the Green River mission post once showed a portrait of Louis XVI. to a hostler of the local tavern. The stableman exclaimed:

"Why, that's Mr. Williams! But he must 'a' been rigged up for a masquerade when he had his picture took!"

The July number of AINSLEE's will contain the next article in Mr. Terhune's "Men of Mystery" series: "Marshal Ney and the North Carolina Schoolmaster."



JUST BEYOND

NEATH unfathomed water there is ground;
Space lies just outside the prison bars;
Through the deep'ning twilight shine the stars;
Just beyond our doubting, faith is found.

ANTOINETTE DE COURSEY PATTERSON.



The Patteran

By William Almon Wolff

Author of "Behind the Screen,"
"Ebenezer Timpson's Son," etc.



GRAEME was going for a walk. People do go for walks, with a fair degree of frequency, even in New York, but they do not very often set out when the sun is still so low above the eastern horizon that the apartment houses hide it, and when the purple shadows of the night still linger in the blue of a cloudless morning sky. They do not issue, as did Graeme, from the ornate, but not ornamental, entrance of an apartment house into an air as sparkling as champagne, and stand hesitating, with a choice to make between a dozen routes for a tramp meant to last until the moment when it shall be necessary to plunge into the subway, with the day's work waiting at the other end of that foul tube.

Now, Graeme went for a walk every morning of the year, but this morning, as you have guessed, was to be set apart from its fellows by an adventure. Graeme did not know this, as he stood pondering on the corner, but he had hopes. He had had hopes for several mornings, indeed, and it seemed to him high time that they should be fulfilled. He pondered, frowning, tapping the pavement thoughtfully with his stick, because he felt that he had given Chance every fair opening, and that it was time for him to force her hand. (Is Chance a lady, like Fortune? I think so.)

There was a girl, you know. Not that it was because of her that Graeme went walking every day. He had done that long before he had seen her first.

And he had not even been interested in her, especially, the first time his path and hers had crossed. But when it had happened a dozen times in the course of a month, he had become very much interested indeed. He had seen her in all sorts of places. On Washington Bridge, once, where they had both stopped to stare southward at the stirring city, lightly veiled in smoke and the haze of dawn, with the sun touching the tops of the towers that reached to the skies; and in a lane in the Bronx—a lane you reached by turning a corner from a street that was full of bricks piled high and the smell of new mortar, a lane that was sweet with the smell of new-mown hay and vivid with the first blooms of goldenrod and purple asters; and—oh, in all sorts of places.

He had come to look for her. In real country lanes, of course, they would have spoken long since. But about even the lanes that they had found while all their fellows slept there had been something meretricious, some savor of bricks and stones. Once or twice he had been sure that she had smiled, but always he had been too late to be quite sure. All that he did know, surely and beyond all doubt, was that she was not the sort of lady to whom one spoke casually.

Still, it had been something to see her, to catch a glimpse of her brown flitting. It seemed to him that there was as little method in her walks as in his own. She might take the same

road for days together, and then, arbitrarily, choose a new one every day for a week. And he had always done that, too. Chance it was that had made their choice concur so often; chance, too, he supposed, with a resentment not really justified, that for a week had kept him from seeing her at all.

On this morning he wanted greatly to have a glimpse of her. It was a morning to inspire a tired business man to write an ode! For days a stifling, unseasonable heat had held the city in its grip. And then, the night before, dark clouds had hovered over the town; in the south there had been lightning, striking through the murky, sultry air. He had gone to sleep with a soft rain pattering in the leaves outside his window, and he had sallied out into the first day of autumn.

He looked down toward the south and saw the river, gleaming like tarnished silver in the hazy light, and beyond it the Palisades, with here and there a vivid splash of color, foretaste of the later riot of reds and yellows, flung against their dull background of green and brown by the same light frost that had whitened the patch of grass at his feet and coated the tiny pools that remained of the night's rain with a gossamerlike film of ice.

Of course he wanted to see her now, and he had not the least idea, you know, of how to go about it. With all that choice of paths before him that would so greatly have bewildered those fellow cliff dwellers of his, most of whom knew only the well-beaten road from apartment house to subway station, to delicatessen shop or movie palace, how was he to know the one her feet had followed or would follow? What did he know about her, when you came to that?

He was real, you know, and masculine. He was no hero. He would have followed her like a shot, to see where she lodged, if he had had the

chance. There would have been no high-minded nonsense about him. But he had seen her only in the mornings, and her walks, like his, had ended at subway or at L, with, he supposed, some office at the end of the road, as was the case with him, too.

But he was sure of this much, at least—he would not find her by standing still. He tried to work out some plan of flipping a coin that should give him a lead, and found that it couldn't be done. And finally he strode indignantly northward, along Fort Washington Avenue, reasonably sure that he should have gone south or east or west, instead.

And then suddenly, at his very feet, he saw that which made him pause. It was a branch of maple, with one leaf, blood red, that caught his eye, and oddly bent and curved, so that it pointed straight north. He picked it up and stared at it. His pulses stirred as he saw that it had not been blown from the tree above, but had been torn away.

"I wonder!" he said to himself under his breath. "A patteran!"

He let it fall from his hand and it fell so that once more it pointed to the north.

"I'll go you!" he told the maple branch.

And he walked on, with a certain confidence, straight north. He had found his patteran on the pavement, within a dozen feet of the brick wall of an apartment house. At that moment he had been hedged in by the city, with brick and stone all about him. But in five minutes of brisk walking he had left the city behind him. There were no more pavements; an earthen road, with its dust laid by the night's rain, was under his feet. In hedges on either side blazed goldenrod and sumac, and purple asters glowed through the weeds of an abandoned garden. On his left the cliff fell sheer away, so that he could look down and out over the val-

ley of the Harlem, with the silver ribbon of the stream gleaming in the sunlight, and beyond it the heights of the Bronx, and, far away, the misty shimmer of the Sound.

Where the tablet that marks the site of one of the bastions of old Fort Washington drew his eye, he could see, through the trees, the Hudson, and a long, lazy tow of barges slipping slowly downstream behind their tug. Up from the valley came a dull sound. He was a little exalted, you know; he was almost ready to believe he heard the echo of the guns that had thundered within a stone's throw of where he stood when the British held New York and sought to move up the Hudson to relieve Burgoyne at Saratoga. But it was only the crash of a subway train as it entered the tunnel they have made under Fort George.

But he didn't care, crass though the reality was. He didn't have to look down into the ugly valley, where hideous, glaring clusters of flat houses have been built up about the subway stations, and streets have been laid out where, not so long ago, the Dyckmans farmed their land. He could keep his eyes to the front, and watch for the turn in the road where the full view of the great river would burst upon him, so that he could follow its course until it broadened hazily into the Tappan Zee.

And then, when he reached the turn, he did nothing of the sort. He blessed the patteran, instead, and thrilled to the russet flash of the brown girl, leaning against the top rail of a decaying fence, looking away up the river. Slim she was, and golden brown, russet, the very color of the day. His eyes devoured her as he came nearer to her, since her back was turned to him and he could stare without offense. She was dressed all in brown, as she had been each time that he had seen her, but she had marked the coming of autumn. It was a suit she wore, of some rough

stuff. Her coat was loose, and her short skirt stopped at the top of her stout brown shoes. A brown tam hid her hair, but he knew all about that hair. It was coppery, full of all the shades of red and brown.

Slowly and more slowly he walked as he neared her. He wanted to walk right up and stand beside her and talk to her. He even meant to do it. But he didn't know just how. Who was she, anyhow? And why did she, alone of all the thousands on the Heights, walk like this at dawn? To what did she give these morning hours, when sleep is most inviting? Just to a walk, to exercise? He hoped it was more than that; that, like him, there was in her mind some thought of worship at the shrine of Pan, great Pan, who is not dead and who shall never die.

Here were no pavements to betray him. His feet fell softly on the kindly earthen road, and she did not turn to surprise the wonder in his eyes. And so, for the first time, he heard her voice. He saw her stand straight suddenly, saw her fling out a brown arm to river and to sky. And then her voice:

"The white moth to the closing vine,
The bee to the open clover,
And the gypsy blood to the gypsy blood
Ever the wide world over!"

Again his pulses leaped. And before he knew what he meant to do, he heard his own voice answering her:

"Ever the wide world over, lass,
Ever the trail held true,
Over the world and under the world,
And back at the last to you!"

She spun around to stare at him, standing rigid, wide-eyed with wonder, the color rising in her cheeks, her hands clasping the fence rail behind her. And then the wonder in her eyes gave way to something else, something elusive, tempting.

"Oh!" she said. "It's you!"

"I—I didn't mean to startle you!" he

said, appalled. "It—it just came out! I couldn't help it——"

But his alone were confusion and dismay. She smiled.

"Why shouldn't you?" she asked. "You've as much right to do it as I."

"You see," he said, "I really have a sort of excuse. I followed a Romany patteran that brought me here——"

And now he saw the color flood her brown cheeks, rushing up from her brown, bare throat.

"Oh!" she cried faintly. "I—I never meant—— I didn't think——"

"My soul!" he said, with a little gasp. "And I never knew! It was you who laid that patteran! And I thought it was just chance that——"

"It was just chance!" she said furiously. "How dare you suggest that I laid it there for you to follow?"

"I didn't! I never did!" he said, aghast. But then his heart sang, and the corners of his mouth crinkled. "But you did!" he cried. "Whether you meant to or not, you did! You called me to you here—where morning waits at the end of the world! And—here I am—and here you are—and please, what are you going to do with me now?"

For a moment, you know, anything might have come of that. She might have been offended and angry; perhaps she tried to be those proper things. But, instead, she laughed. And he laughed, too. He laughed because it seemed to him that she was so infinitely more delightful than he had dreamed she could be, and because there was music in her voice, and because—oh, just because the patteran had led him to her, and he knew that he and she were as young as the young day and the young world that they had to themselves on the crest of the hill.

"Where did you go—all these last days?" he asked her.

"Where did you go?" she countered. And they laughed again.

"Do you mind if I'm quite shameless?" she asked. "I have wondered about you. We've had the secret of the mornings between us—haven't we?—even if we don't know one another——"

"But we do!" he cried. "We do—we always have! There aren't so many of us who follow the cross of the gypsy trail——"

"And that's why I've wondered about you," she went on, as if he had said nothing at all. "Sometimes, you know, it's seemed as if we had the world to ourselves, when we met in a lane or on the bridge, and we were so careful—oh, so careful!—not to look at one another——"

"But now we've looked!" he said.

That was what his lips said. But his eyes, you know, said all sorts of things besides, and he saw the color flooding her cheeks again, and the smile that she tried so hard to banish, and somehow he was confused.

"Have you been out every day, too?" he asked her. "When all the lazy ones stayed home in bed——"

"The sleepy ones—the tired ones—the poor ones," she said. "They're not all lazy! Oh, aren't you sorry for them? They miss all this that we have for our own——"

"Together," he said. "Can't we—after this? Can't we have our walks together?"

"Can we?" Her eyes met his, curious, full of wonder, a little shy. And then again she laughed. "Yes!" she cried softly. "Oh, I will be quite shameless now! I—I hoped you'd see the patteran and know it, too."

He bent toward her suddenly and took her hand and raised it to his lips for a moment. And when he spoke, his voice was not quite steady.

"This isn't New York!" he said. "It can't be! Things like this don't happen in New York, and in New York girls like you aren't real! It is the end

of the world where morning waits—and soon you'll fly away!"

"Oh, but does it matter where it is?" she cried. "You know—I'll be in the subway soon, riding to the office, and the air won't be like wine, and when I smile, because I'm thinking of all this, some man will think I want to flirt, and I'll be—oh, so dreadfully ashamed! And then I'll know that I mustn't come again——"

"Please!" he begged. "Little brown girl—look at me! Are you going to turn it to New York again?"

She did look at him, for a long moment. And she must have seen something in his eyes that changed her mood again.

"No—I'm not!" she said. She sparkled, and her white teeth gleamed through her parted lips. "I won't be feminine! I won't pretend I'm afraid of you or any other man! I won't be a Victorian prude! If I want to be friends with you, I will—and—and—I think I want to be."

"That's better!" he said. "Oh, ever so much better! Friends we'll be. And—so——"

"Yes?"

"Do you believe," he asked her soberly, "that even air like wine is not all one needs for breakfast? Do you like eggs—and bacon—and hot rolls—and coffee with real cream?"

"Oh!" she said viciously. "And I thought I'd like you! To talk about such things—here—when there's no chance to get them!"

"But I'm a magician," he told her. "You didn't know that. And that just shows how much you've still to learn about me. Look!"

He waved his hands, making passes in the air.

"See!" he said. "Look at the smoke curling from the chimney of the inn over there! They don't want us—for breakfast. But we'll make them take us in. We'll go over there and make

them spread a clean white cloth for us on a table that held lobster and champagne last night, and I'll sit where some stout broker sat, and you where Maisie of 'The Follies' put her elbows on the table, and we'll be glad we're we instead of them!"

"I'm really very indignant," she said. "You quite understand—don't you?—that nice girls—and I'm a very nice girl!—don't go to breakfast with strange young men who pick them up. Do you really think they'll feed us?"

"I know it!" he said, with determination. "Even if they don't. Come on!"

They shook that road house to its foundations with their demand for breakfast. Breakfast! Those who filled its coffers breakfasted in bed, with blinds drawn close to shut out the glare of a sun high in the heavens. But one came to reason with them and drive them away who saw, by the gleam in Graeme's eyes, that he would have eggs and bacon and no arguments. And so the seal was set upon their friendship by the breaking of bread, with the morning song of birds in their ears and, for the girl, all the broad Hudson and its hills to feast her eyes upon. But as for Graeme's eyes, you know, other fare was set before them.

"Janet?" he said, later, when they had begun to talk about each other, and she had told him her name. "Janet Balfour? Why—that will do. I might have chosen a better name for you, and perhaps some day I will. But that will do for now. And you pick out scenarios for an incorporated beast that makes moving pictures? Good heavens—why?"

"Because the beast crosses my palm with silver, sir! And it's a nice beast. It's reformed me—a little. You see, I used to—are you going to like me still, after I confess?—I used to write scenarios instead of just editing them! Awful, buggy things they were, with murders in them, and a punch! And

then the beast brought me to New York to work for it in its cave——"

"It is a beast with certain merits," he conceded gravely. "No beast brought me. I just came. I wonder," he went on reflectively, "if I didn't see a patteran in a dream?"

"You laughed, with your eyes, when you said that," she said accusingly. "It isn't fair to make pretty speeches and not mean them, and raise a poor girl's hopes——"

"I think I'll mean them," he said deliberately, "as soon as you'll let me."

"You think!" she mocked. "But you don't know, do you?"

And then, before he could answer, she rose swiftly, a laugh on her lips.

"Oh, but this isn't me!" she said. "I'm utterly abandoned to-day! And so—and so—it really is time for me to go. I'll be late, and the beast will growl."

"Let him! You'll have a seat in the subway, anyhow! And I'll be late, too. And one oughtn't to be late—when one works on an evening newspaper."

She squealed suddenly and joyously.

"Oh, now I know!" she cried. She pointed a derisive finger at him, and he squirmed. "You're the Donald Graeme who writes the worst scenarios in the world! My beast buys all you send it! Shame on you! You weren't going to own up!"

"You didn't tell me your beast's name," he said defensively. "And I don't believe you know a good scenario when you see it, anyhow!"

"You wait!" she said viciously. "I'll be enthusiastic about the next one you write that they make me read, and they'll send it back to you. That's the way the beast uses me. He takes all the ones I say are bad, and returns all the ones I like! He was going to fire me until I suggested that."

He didn't want to go, even then. But she would stay no longer, and so they walked together down the long hill to

Broadway, and through the funny little street that leads through the hill to the subway, where a policeman must stand night and day, because, probably, he was talking to his girl some time when the roundsman came along. But Graeme could let her leave him because her eyes were truthful, and he knew that he would never need a patteran again to find her. Much he cared for what his city editor, with perfect justice, called him! Mad he might be, but so was she.

She met him shyly next morning. She drooped a little. Gone were the gayety, the abandon, that had marked her mood the day before.

"Oh, it's real," he told her, when they had walked along in silence for some minutes after their greeting. "Were you afraid it couldn't be, too?"

Her eyes were troubled as she let them meet his frankly.

"Oh, I was ashamed!" she said. "I wasn't coming. I didn't dare to hope that you'd understand me as I was yesterday."

"I think I do," he said, very soberly. "Yesterday doesn't quite—count, does it? We can't start from there, I mean, and go on. We've got to go along quietly, and wait until we catch up to it?"

"You did understand—you do," she said slowly. "That was what I didn't dare to hope for. Oh, we are going to be friends if you're really like that! If you can wait for me to get over being frightened——"

"I wouldn't have you frightened for all the world," he told her. "But I do want to be friends, you know. Do you know that in all this town there's no girl that I can call on—that I know well enough to call by her first name?"

"Oh, I've been lonely, too," she said. "I live with the nicest old couple, but they don't like me much. They think I'm wild and strange, and they'll never, never, get used to these morning walks

of mine. And they're sure I'm wicked because on Sundays I go off with my lunch and a book and come home for supper with my hair blowing and my hands scratched and mud on my shoes."

"Have you walked along on top of the Palisades, too? Did you ever cross at Yonkers and climb up and walk to Nyack?"

"Did I?" she echoed scornfully. "Do you know that spot on Staten Island where you can sit on the turf and watch the steamers going past, and hear the bells, sometimes, when the wind is from the east?"

"Don't I? And there's a little point, near Pelham, where you can sit, just at dusk, and see the lights in the Sound, red and white and white and red, twinkling out like stars when it grows dark, and the salt air comes up out of the marshes——"

"And the boats go chugging past, with their searchlights playing tag and the band playing softly! Oh, I know!"

"We know!" he said. "And it's all New York—the ugly old town that's a prison for us two!"

"New York—yes," she said. "But it's not New York, is it? It's what New York makes us think of. The open country—all that New York has left of it."

"The start of the gypsy trail—over the world and back," he said. "It's the old trail that calls us both, and we set our feet upon it—and then draw back——"

"Have you done that, too? Oh, I've wanted to get away! I've planned and dreamed and hoped—and then—I'm afraid—always——"

Somehow there was an end of confusion and restraint between them. Once more they were talking gayly, freely, as they had done the day before.

"You shouldn't be afraid," he said. "You—why, the whole world must lie open to you! And why should you be lonely?"

"Ah, why?" she mocked. "Why are New Yorkers ever lonely? I passed the house where I stayed when I first came here the other day. They were tearing it down—and I cried! And such an ugly house it was! But it was all I had left to think of since—— Oh, that's what's wrong about New York! People don't have homes—they don't make friends! In the country things last—houses and friends and all dear things! But here! Oh, before I die, I'm going to have a home again—out where there are trees and fields!"

"That's where the gypsy trail is to lead you, too?" he said. "That's what I've thought, too, and hoped. But first I want to tread the trail—and not alone."

He stopped and looked away, and they were silent for a little while.

"To the day!" he said suddenly. "To the day of emancipation for us both! And until then—we'll play together, shan't we? We'll show New York that it can't hold us. We'll put on our magic boots and jump over all the bricks and stones and be as free as the town will let us be. Together?"

"Together!" she echoed, and gave him her hand.

And in the eyes of both of them, perhaps, there was a glimpse of what might lie in the future for them; a faint wonder, a question that only the days to come could answer.

They had gone far on that second morning. Her fears were stilled. On the third day, she met him joyously, smiling, and they found themselves back at the moment of their parting on that first morning.

They snatched the moments that the autumn left them, until, at last, it was so late when the sun rose that there were only minutes left to them before the day's work claimed them. But Sundays were theirs to them, all winter long, and no storm held them bound. Through rain and snow they tramped,

setting out early, making their tired way homeward when dusk had fallen.

And though he worked nearly every night, at stories, at the play that they talked over so gravely together as they walked or sat by the fires they built, there were nights for her, too. He had to see the new plays, you know, or how could he hope to write plays himself? And for the good of both their souls there were things that they could not leave undone. They must hear "Tristan" together, and the great symphonies. And there were days that they snatched, reluctantly, from the open air and gave to pictures. Because they were not New Yorkers, but exiles from the hinterland, they knew New York as no New Yorkers ever do.

Often he was waiting for her at the mouth of her beast's cave, and they spurned the subway, to walk slowly home together. And sometimes, instead, they sought out some new restaurant of which one or the other had heard—in Greenwich Village, perhaps, or down on the East Side—and knew the savor of foods strangely cooked.

But whatever they did, wherever they were, they talked always of the spring. Joyously they greeted every sign that heralded its coming, and there are as many harbingers of spring in New York as in the fields and meadows of the countryside. First of all, the lengthening days, when they could begin their real walks again. Morning after morning they met, and with the warm days and frosty nights of February, each morning seemed to hold some new promise of the spring.

"They're beginning to break ground for that new house around the corner from me," she told him one day.

And the next morning he pointed out the newly painted benches in Fort Washington Park.

"They hadn't touched them last week," he said. "They're getting ready, too."

It was she who, on a Sunday, found the first pussy willow, but the first skunk cabbage was his trophy. And then it was she who told him of a spot near Yonkers, along the old Croton aqueduct, where, soon, they could gather violets by the armful, and where, a year before, she had counted five dogwood trees in full blossom in the space of a hundred yards.

And now, sometimes, they walked along hand in hand, without thought of what they did, and there were long silences between them, which one or the other broke with a spoken answer to some unspoken question.

And then, one Saturday, he waited for her release from the beast's cave; waited with sparkling eyes, and the bearing of a man to whom the conquest of the world means nothing. He took one step toward her when she came through the door at last, and then stopped. He saw how she, too, stopped, staring at him, and how the color fled from her cheeks, only to flood them again a moment later. And then she almost ran toward him.

"Oh, Don!" she cried. "They've taken it? They're going to produce your play?"

"Signed the contract an hour ago!" he cried exultantly. "I wouldn't telephone. I had to see you when you knew!"

There were tears in her eyes as they walked away, and her fingers gripped his arm as if she were trying to hold him fast.

They did eat lunch. But neither of them could have told you, the next day, where they had gone. They thought little, in that moment, of such things as food.

"And now?" she said, when they had done.

"I want to play a game," he said. "Remember the day you showed me that old garden up in Westchester, and

wouldn't tell me where we were going?"

She nodded.

"Give me my turn to-day?"

"It's your day!" she said. "Oh, it's your day of days! Of course, Don—we'll go anywhere——"

And so they were caught in the homeward rush of the commuters, and for an hour they rode, with glimpses of the Hudson from the car window, and about them a babel of talk; talk that was larded with the virtues of this grass seed and that fertilizer; with tales of what Jones had accomplished with his garden, and the crass ignorance of Brown in all things pertaining to the soil.

Graeme led the way from the car at last, and waved aside the eager hackmen who were lined up outside the station. Together they climbed a long, steep hill. There had been nearly a week of steady rain, but now the sun shone down, hot and brilliant, out of a sky washed clean and blue. The world was green about them; in gardens, as they neared the top of the hill, dogwoods and magnolias groaned under the weight of their blossoms, and sometimes they passed into the shade of a great chestnut, and the light breeze rained white petals down upon them.

At the summit of the hill they paused, while Graeme made a great mystery of consulting a certain paper that he drew from his pocket.

"We go north first," he said. "Do you remember Broadway, Janet? You've met him before—the old scamp! To see him here, you'd never dream that he'd cut up the way he does not so far from here, would you?"

"Please, Don," she begged, "where are we going?"

"Injun giver!" he mocked. "You said it was my turn—and you wouldn't tell me anything the day you made me follow my leader!"

And so, still obdurate, he led her along Broadway, with stately country places on both sides of them, and always the river gleaming through the trees.

"Millionaires! More millionaires, I suppose!" he said disdainfully, when a limousine passed them and forced them to turn out to avoid being spattered. "A limousine—on a day like this! But you wouldn't expect anything better from people who make formal gardens and plant trees as if they were trying to work out a problem in geometry!"

And then he took her arm and turned her from Broadway, and they walked along a road that climbed slowly, gently, toward the east, until, at the crest of the little hill, they came to a gate over which was a vine-covered arch, where, in a few weeks, roses would be in full bloom. He lifted the latch, and they walked along a path to a little house that seemed to peep out, modestly, from the green that ran riot over it. Janet stopped, abruptly, just before the tiny colonial porch and stood gazing at the white door with the tarnished brass knocker, stained and weathered by the winter's storms.

"Don!" she said. "What——"

"Don't you see, Janet?" he said diffidently. "I said I wanted to play a game. This is the game. It's to pretend that this is our house—yours and mine. I've got the key."

Her clear laugh rang out before the color came into her cheeks again.

"Oh, Don!" she cried. "You—little boy!"

And then he fitted the key into the lock, and they went in, and he went all about, flinging up windows and letting the clean spring air into the rooms. Together they explored the house, room by room. Together they exclaimed at the sudden discovery of the river, which could be seen so clearly from the windows of the great room that filled half of the second floor.

"I think I could work in here," said Graeme.

He had found an attic room above, that might, some time, have been a child's play room. There were windows on three sides, and from none of them could any other house be seen.

Slowly, hands touching often, they went through the house, so that when they came again to the great second-story room and looked down at the river, the sun was below the Palisades and all the western sky was glowing with the sunset tints. Together they leaned out. Janet sighed, as at last she drew back. Slowly, without a word, they went down. He closed the windows and found her, when he had done, waiting for him outside the open door. The hum of insects filled the air; there was something startling in the silence about them, in the cry of a bird, the sudden chattering of a squirrel.

"Janet?" said Graeme uncertainly. "Dear?"

And then, somehow, she was in his arms, and he was holding her close, and his lips were on hers.

"Ah!" he said, at last, and, though he released her, one arm still held her close to him. "You said it was my day of days—and now you've made it true!"

The arm that he had freed stole up and drew his head down to hers again. And they stood so for a long time, while the dusk crept softly down about them, until he felt her shiver, slightly, almost imperceptibly.

"Don!" she said suddenly. "Dear—are you sure—oh, very, very sure, that you—you—want me?"

He laughed and held her closer, and she sighed and seemed to be content. And then, at last:

"We must go home," she said.

"Home!" he echoed, and laughed. "But soon this will be home. I hadn't seen it—I wouldn't see it without you. But I knew that if they'd told the truth about it, it was the home we wanted."

In the faint glow of the dying day he saw the sudden trouble in her eyes. She looked about her, and her breath came faster.

"Oh, yes," she said slowly, uncertainly. "It's the sort of home we've talked and dreamed of, Don—isn't it? Isn't it?"

"Isn't it?" he asked in turn. "Isn't it the home we've dreamed of at the end of the trail—the gypsy trail? We'll travel that together, dear—'over the world and under the world, and back at the last—' Back here! We can go now. We can set our feet on the trail and not draw back. We can go when we please—we can see all the world we've dreamed of! We needn't be jealous when we see the steamers going out. We'll stand together and try to pick out the spot where we used to sit and long to be away, as we slip past Staten Island some morning—"

"But here, Don—here!" she cried. "Oh, Don—I can't! I'm a cheat—a wretched little cheat! I can't come here to live with you! I'm afraid—afraid!"

"But, dear," he said, "what—why —"

She flung out both her arms. About her there was a sudden, a bewildering passion.

"It's this that I'm afraid of!" she cried. "The silence—all the things I've pretended I wanted! Don—to live here—to live here twenty-four hours a day, with this thick silence all about one! Never to hear a trolley bell! Never to hear a newsboy shouting extras! Never to hear the friendly feet pounding along the pavements! Never to decide, just as we finish dinner, to rush off downtown and see some silly, trifling show we wouldn't dream of going to if we had to plan days ahead to go into town for the theater—"

"Janet!" he cried, amazed. But there was no anger in his voice. "Janet—you cheat! Why—I'd planned it all for you! I thought—I hoped— I

meant to stand it for your sake! But I want the city, too—the great, living city where we found one another!”

A silence fell between them. Somehow, slowly, uncertainly, they moved through the door and stood looking at one another in the dusk, on the little stone path that led to the vine-covered gate of the garden. Above them the sky glowed, dusky, faintly luminous still with the afterglow of sunset, touched here and there by the shimmer of a star. And suddenly Graeme bent down. He laughed out joyously.

“Oh, Janet—look!” he cried.

At their feet lay a branch of maple—another patteran, pointing to the city. Her somber eyes lightened as they turned, questioningly, from the maple leaf to meet the triumph in his.

“It’s showing us the way!” he cried. “The way back to the city that made us live—that even showed us what we had never, never seen in the country! What were lanes and hills to us when they were all about us? It was in the city that we found the gypsy trail—and now it leads us home! It was the city that taught us the meaning of spring! It was the city that set us to listening for a bird’s song, to looking for pussy willows on the first warm days! And I thought you wanted to leave it!”

“And I—I thought you did!” she said. “Oh, Don—come!”

Hand in hand, laughing, like children freed, they set their feet upon the path that the patteran had pointed out to them.



HER COMING

LIGHT on the hilltops, dew on the clover,
Dawn, and a song in the air;
Gold of the buttercups half the world over,
And gold in the sheen of her hair.
She's coming, she's coming! Her footsteps are shaking
The gossamer spun from the thorn.
She's coming, O heart, and the flowers are waking!
She's coming and bringing the morn!

Splendor on far peaks, dusk in the valleys.
Oh, wonder and joy of the day!
'Mid opaline shadows the brooklet outsallies;
The nest is a-swing on the spray.
She's coming, she's coming! Her sandals are gleaming
Along the waste places of night.
She's coming to waken my soul from its dreaming,
And drench the new world with delight.

JAMES B. KENYON.



The Code

By L. W. Pedrose



SHE stood in the doorway of the little log cabin on Turkey Ridge, the gnarled handle of a home-made broom in her brown hands, her gaze resting absently on a chain of hills to the east that rose, dark green and quiet, to meet the blue North Carolina sky.

She was seventeen. Her eyes were a deep, warm brown, and her hair was as black as a lowlands night. Though a child in years, she was a woman grown, slender, yet rounded, and as supple as a young hill sapling.

Her short skirt was of tan burlap; her waist was a blue flannel affair, cut blouse fashion, with a low neck, and this was set off with a bow of bright red that matched a similar ribbon at the end of the single long, thick braid of her hair. She was barefooted and bare-ankled, and her limbs were as brown as her forearms.

"Arabella!" came a youthful voice from some distance down the mountain. "Oh, Arabella Pettibone!"

Arabella smiled. It was the voice of little Billy Cockrill, who lived a mile farther along the ridge.

In another moment the boy appeared, first a battered straw hat of immense size coming into view, then a long rifle, resting on a tiny shoulder, and lastly four feet five of wiry young moun-

taineer. Panting, he stood before the girl and proudly handed her a letter.

"Brother Jed fetched it from the Crossroads, and it's fer you," he explained between breaths. "I was down to the gorge, lookin' for a cat, and met him. He's waitin' fer me. So long."

Arabella did not seem to hear; her eyes were on the letter in her hand. The boy took a few steps, then halted.

"So long, Airy Bella!" he repeated over his shoulder, with an impish grin.

Arabella made an unconscious gesture of dismissal with the broom handle.

"So long, Billy—and thank you."

Still grinning, he disappeared at a dogtrot down among the riotously blooming laurels that lined the trail, and Arabella turned and entered the cabin, leaving the broom resting against the doorframe, her eyes still fastened on the letter.

"A letter—a r'al letter—the fust I aiver got!" she cried joyfully, dropping into a chair beside the heavy puncheon table in the center of the room. "And it's from you, Dickie—that I know. You air comin' back to yore Bella." A wistful look crossed her face and she slid her elbows out upon the table. "Two y'ars is a long time, sweetheart—a moughty long time. But—yo'll find yore Bella the same ol' gal!"

She did not see the bare head and broad, sloping shoulders of a man that appeared in the single window of the cabin, close to the door. He had a lowering brow, a heavy jaw, which was emphasized by a two weeks' growth of black beard, and a thick, untrimmed head of hair of the same midnight hue. Casting a stealthy glance down the mountainside, he turned his gaze upon the girl within, the muscles of his dark face working, the flame of desire in his small, beady eyes.

"You took my love, Dickie—my fust kiss," continued Arabella to the letter softly, knowing nothing of the presence of the watcher. "You don't know what that means to a gal—her fust kiss. Us hill women air strange critters, Dickie. We hate with the hate o' snakes, ur we love to the dep's o' our souls—and we're true to our men, always. Yes, Dickie, you took my fust —"

The broom in the doorway fell to the floor, and she wheeled and rose with the liteness of a cat—to find herself face to face with the uncouth watcher of the window. His little pig eyes held a strange gleam.

"Yo' speakin' o' Dick Slade, Arabella?" he asked roughly.

Tucking the letter out of sight under her arm, Arabella gripped the table so hard that her knuckles showed white through the skin.

"What you doin' up here, Anse Cavendar?" she demanded, ignoring his question.

He threw back his head and laughed. "I come up tuh see yo', o' co'se. Why, ain't yo' glad tuh see me?"

"Glad to see you?" Arabella's eyes flashed. "Didn't I tell you distinctly not to come round here lessen mom and pap was here, too?"

"And how'm I tuh know when they's here ur not?" chuckled the visitor.

Arabella's eyes, already hot with indignation, met his with flaming scorn.

"Oh, I 'low you seen them go, ur you wouldn't 'a' come! The last time they went to town, you drapped in 'fore they was more'n out o' sight—yes, and the time before, too! Think yo're cunnin', don't you?"

"But I didn't come up tuh see yore mom an pap," paried Anse. "I come up tuh see yo'!"

"Oh, did you?" Arabella wagged a finger under his nose. "Look here, Anse Cavendar. I ain't a-aimin' fer hit to get round that I'm keepin' comp'ny with the likes o' you, and you'd better cl'ar out!"

A wave of crimson swept her admirer's face.

"Why *don't* yo' wanter keep comp'ny with me?" he glared.

Drawing back, with her head held high, she swept him from crown to feet with a withering glance.

"You—ask—me—that!"

"Yes," he flared, lessening the distance between them with a short stride. "Why don't yo'?" Throwing out his chest, he pounded it with both fists. "Ain't I a man—a man's man? Yes, an' a wummin's man, too! Tell me—is theh another man in these hills as can shoulder a hogshead o' taller? Is theh a man as can beat me a-wrasslin' ur a-runnin'? Is theh a man as can whup me, foul or fair, stan'-up ur rough-an'-tumble? Tell me—is theh?"

"Yes," retorted Arabella quietly, "theh is."

"Who?" he mouthed. "Show 'im tuh me!"

"Dick Slade could whup you, Anse Cavendar!" she shot back.

Retreating a step, he swallowed hard, his glance involuntarily shifting about the room.

"Yes, Dick Slade could whup you, Anse Cavendar," repeated Arabella coldly, "and with one hand tied behind his back! I suppose you fergot that fracas down at the Crossroads afore Dick went away, when he caught you

and Sid Slavens bullyin' ol' Nigger Tom and threatenin' to hang him with his own galluses if he didn't give you the two bits he 'arned cuttin' wood all that day! 'You and Sid Slavens—big, overgrown bullies—waylayin' a pore, crippled-up ol' nigger! Yes, and Dick made you 'pologize, too, didn't he? Made you 'pologize to a nigger!' Anse's jaws worked, and she could hear his teeth grinding. "Yes, Dick Slade could whup you, Anse Cavendar—and he's done hit a thousand times!"

Recovering, Anse hitched up his trousers with almost a swagger.

"Tuh hear him tell it, Arabella," he returned easily, "tuh hear him tell it! He took boxin' lessons, you know. But"—a cunning look crossed his face and faded—"yo'll never see Dick Slade back in these hills. Tom Medrow, as went West with Dick, is back. I seed Tom yestiday. He says Dick ain't a-comin' back, 'case he's goin' tuh marry a rich rancher gal out in Wyoming!"

"You lie!" Arabella glided behind the table. "You know you lie!" There was a bit of doubt in her face, however.

"No, I ain't lyin'," continued Anse confidently. "Dick naiver did love yo' so turrible, like I do. He allus said he liked eddicated women best, an' that yo' was jest a pore, ignorant li'l mountain gal!"

Arabella could not conceal an uneasiness that had come over her. Anse noted this.

"'Member that huskin' bee over at Cockrills', afore Dick went away?" he pursued relentlessly. "'Member the li'l schoolma'am from the Crossroads—how Dick slighted yo' jest tuh sit with her at the supper table?"

"He didn't!" interjected Arabella. She was wholly on the defensive now. "I was helpin' with the servin'!"

"And"—Anse smiled ironically—"I suppose yo' was washin' dishes that hull hour *after* supper, when him an'

her was chinnin' in the haymow!" Arabella's hand went to her throat; she drew in her breath with a hiss; her bosom heaved. "Why, even Pahson Hewitt's wife said it was shameless the way he treated yo'—since yo'd been lettin' everybody see yo' was his steady!"

Dubiously Arabella drew from under her arm the hidden letter, and Anse, turning away to hide his exultation, did not note her action.

"No, Arabella," he concluded, "Dick ain't a-comin' back. He wasn't our kind—yore'n an' mine. He was one of them fellers what gets a bit o' eddication an' thinks they's polished—too good fer yo' an' me. He naiver cal'lated tuh come back, an' some day he'll write an' tell yo' so!"

"I don't b'lieve you, Anse Cavendar," groaned Arabella miserably, as she unfolded the letter with nerveless fingers. "I don't b'lieve you!"

He wheeled at the crinkling of paper. "Oh," he exclaimed, "yo' got the letter already!"

"Yes," returned Arabella defiantly, "I got a letter. But I know you air lyin', jest the same, and if I could read, I'd *prove* it!"

Leaning over the table, he plucked the missive from her.

"Waal, I can read. Lessee it!" Laboriously he read: "'Dear Arabella—I ain't a-comin' back like I promised —'"

Clutching at her heart, Arabella leaned weakly against the table, her eyes closing and her breath coming and going in little gasps of pain.

"—an' I'm sorry. Theh is an eddicated gal out here in Wyoming as loves me. She has a ranch, an' I'm goin' tuh marry an' settle down. Yo' won't miss me, Arabella. Two y'ars is a long time. Yo've seen lots of fellers since I left that yo' can like as well as me. That's all it was—yo' *liked* me. Yo' wasn't old enuff tuh know what r'al

love is. Yo'll soon fergit. Good-by.— Dick Slade.' Thar, Arabella," contemptuously tossing the letter to the floor, "I told yo' he wasn't comin' back. He was only playin' with yo'!"

Arabella looked up at her tormentor with a face that was pinched with suffering.

"You lie, Anse Cavendar!" she shrilled. "You know you lie! You air a Cavendar—and they's lyin' skunks, ev'ry one o' them! They shoot men in the back from the bresh and they treat their women like dogs!" Whirling with a dry sob, she dropped into a chair, flung her arms out upon the table, and buried her face in them. "Oh, dear Gawd, I wush I was daid!"

Worried, Anse leaned toward her.

"Don't, Arabella—don't carry on like that! I love yo'! Yo' know, an' I know, Dick Slade's broken with yo'—but I don't hold it agin' yo'. Yo're too mort'l fine a lookin' gal tuh be an ol' maid! I want yo'!" Capturing one of her hands, he raised it to his lips and kissed it once—twice—thrice, passionately.

As if she had been stung, Arabella jerked the hand away and leaped to her feet, staring at the spot he had kissed. He, doubtlessly believing his suit won, started around the table toward her, his arms raised hungrily.

"Yo' an' me's the same kind, Arabella. Kain't yo' love me?"

With all the strength in her supple body, she struck, her half-open hand catching him full in the face, staggering him. Quickly she placed the table between them. He grinned at her sheepishly, stroking the cheek she had slapped.

"You keep yore paws off me, Anse Cavendar—yore dirty paws!" she gritted. "Down the mountain they call you 'Devil Anse.' But I ain't one o' the half-wit Mollies that crawl fer yore smiles! Ugh!" shuddering with revul-

sion and rubbing the back of the hand he had kissed on her skirt.

With sudden, blind fury, he lunged toward her.

"Damn yo'!" he snarled, his face livid with passion. "I'll show yo'!"

Round and round the table she dashed, with him in close pursuit, hurling chairs in his way, fear lending wings to her feet. He soon realized that he could never catch her unless he changed tactics, and paused. She halted on the instant. Gripping the table with his huge hands so hard that it creaked, he glared at her with animal ferocity across the scant yard separating them.

By watching his little eyes, she saw what he intended doing before the impulse from his brain became crystallized into action. Panicky, she turned, just as he hurled the table aside; and, without realizing what she was doing, she stampeded to a chair and climbed up on it.

He leaped and caught her about the thighs. Inexorably he drew her to him, swung her off the chair, and let her slip slowly down till her lashing feet touched the floor. She tore and clawed at him, but he only tightened his hold. Slowly, cruelly, he bent back her head and crushed his lips to hers.

It was a long moment before he released her. Then, letting her fall heavily to the floor, he leaped for the door, the cabin ringing with his wild, exultant laughter.

"That's jest the fust one, Arabella—the fust I aiver took from yo'!" he flung over his shoulder. She could only press the back of her hand to her torn lips and moan. "Dick Slade could naiver love yo' like that! I'm goin' down to the gorge now an' fetch my saddle mule. I'll be right back. Git yore duds packed. Yo' an' me's goin' back inter the mountains!"

With a final throaty chuckle, he went out, and his footsteps could be heard

receding down the rocky mountain path.

Staggering to her feet, Arabella noted a drop of crimson from her lips on her fingers and rushed to the door.

"You kissed me, you foul brute!" she cried hoarsely. "And I'm goin' to kill you fer hit! I'll make you die a million deaths fer ev'ry drop o' blood yore dirty fangs drew from me!" Turning, she reeled to the letter lying on the floor where Anse had flung it. "Oh, dear Gawd, why ain't I got a man to pertec' me? Dick!" Dropping on her knees, she grabbed up the letter. "Dick! Why ain't you comin' back? Why ain't you? Was it 'case I was jest a pore, ignorant li'l mountain gal, like you said?" A note of deep pathos crept into her voice. "Dick, I naiver did have a chance to go to school—you know that! I don't know nothin' about books, Dick, but I *do* know how to *love*. They kain't l'arn you that in books, Dick. You got to *live* it and *feel* it!" Pressing the letter to her bosom with both hands, she gazed rapturously into the distance. "Oh, Dickie, if I could jest hear yore whistle come trillin' along the ridge once more, I b'lieve I'd be the happies' gal in this worl'!"

She did not hear a trilling whistle that came from a distance, faintly.

"Oh, Dickie, I love you—I love you—even if you *did* marry a eddicated rancher gal!"

The whistle came again, now quite close, and, hearing it, she got up, a look of utter bewilderment on her face. Footsteps could be heard alongside the cabin. Slowly, haltingly, she followed them as they proceeded around to the door.

"Dick!" she breathed. "Dickie! Is that you, ur have you died and gone to haiven, and that's yore ghos' a-whistlin' and a-walkin'?"

A tall, bronzed young fellow in a wide-brimmed Stetson and a new suit

of store clothes appeared in the doorway. His face wore a happy, expectant smile, and he threw out his arms invitingly as he stepped into the room.

But Arabella took one timorous step toward him, her hands upraised as if to make sure he was not an apparition; then, without touching him, she crushed the letter to her and turned to the table.

"Oh, Dickie boy," she thrilled, her eyes misty, "this is how I allus dreamed you'd come—with a smile on yore lips and yore love in yore eyes! But," holding the letter out before her and shaking her head sadly at it, "it kain't be—it kain't be! You can only come to me like this—in dreams. Yo're another woman's. Yo're out there in Wyoming now, tellin' her the things you uster tell me!"

With quick, vigorous strides, he crossed to her.

"Arabella!" Grasping her by the shoulders, he swung her round to face him. "What're you drivin' at? Ain't I here? Didn't I come back, like I promised?"

As his powerful hands clamped down on her slim shoulders, she saw a great light. He was very material indeed.

"Then," she cried, not knowing just what she was saying, so great was the joy that welled up within her, "you—ain't—goin'—to git—married?"

He laughed.

"Shore I am!" She stiffened. "Of course I am—jest as quick as we can get down to Pahson Hewitt's! Then, gal, we're goin' out to Wyoming, you and me—to the ranch I bought fer you! That's what I wrote in the letter—the very one you got in yore hand—only I wasn't expectin' to get back afore next Sunday. And honey girl—" He bent to kiss her and for the first time noted that her lips were torn and bleeding. "Arabella! How come that?"

Hiding her face against his breast,

she moaned like a stricken thing. He released her, dashed to the door, then sprang back again.

"Arabella!" There was thunder in his voice. "As I come along the ridge, I seen Devil Anse leave here. Did—he—do that?"

She lifted her eyes to his. Her face was hard and white.

"Yes," ominously, "he done that! And yo're the only man as has a right to kiss me, Dick. He knew it, and he mauled me—and he druv his dirty claws inter my neck. You know the code o' the hills, Dick. You got to kill him fer that!"

Crossing to the wall, she took down a long muzzle-loading musket that rested on pegs there. But Dick, with a stifled groan, dashed off his hat and, dropping into a chair, buried his head in his hands in misery.

"It's the code o' these hills, Dick—yore code and my code," she repeated in the same steely tones, as she made sure that there was a firing cap on the nipple of the musket. "Anse is comin' right back with his saddle mule—to carry me back inter the mountains, he said——"

She broke off as she turned and noted her lover's agitation. Wonderingly she hastened to his side and, dropping the butt of the musket to the floor, laid a hand lightly on his shoulder.

"Arabella," he groaned in abject misery, "I kain't kill Anse Cavendar! Don't ask me to! Don't!"

She drew back as if he had burned her.

"You—kain't—kill — Anse—Cavendar?" she echoed, wide-eyed with unbelief. "You—kain't—kill—that—pole-cat? Air you out o' your haid? Do you mean you ain't the kind what per-tec's their women? Dick, look here!" Grasping his collar, she bent him backward till his eyes met hers. "What's the matter with you? You ain't the ol'

Dick, the man I gave my love to? Whar's yore pride—yore sand?"

Twisting from her grasp, he got up on his feet.

"Lissen, Arabella," he protested, husky-voiced, "and yo'll see why I kain't kill Anse Cavendar. Last week pap's mo'gage fell due. Ol' Jew Cavendar, Anse's pap, held the note. He wanted to fo'close. Anse wouldn't let him. Maybe Anse was afraid of me—I dunno. But he saved the farm for mom an' pap tell I come with the money to pay off the note. Don't you see—I kain't kill him—I kain't!"

Arabella drew herself up to her full height, quivering with indignation.

"So," she scorned, "you'd see me mauled and insulted by that animal, and not turn a hair—jest 'case yore pap got in debt! And you call yoreself a man—a No'th Ca'linan!" Letting the musket drop to the floor, she turned away, her attitude one of utter dejection. "All right. I guess you left yore manhood out in Wyoming—ranchin'!" She crossed to the door. "Even Devil Anse'd think a woman's love preciouser 'n you, once he got her!" She glanced back to note the effect of her words. She could hear faint hoofbeats, approaching up the mountainside. "Anse's comin' now with his saddle mule. I'm goin' down and meet him. Good-by."

With a single movement, the tortured man swept up the musket and leaped to his feet.

"You do," he almost shrieked, "and I'll kill you both!"

A quick, triumphant glance Arabella shot down the mountain; then she turned back into the room.

"All right, Dick—all right. If that's the way you feel about it, I won't take the trouble to walk down to him. He," listlessly, "he'll be here in a minute. You can shoot us both here as well—and the saddle mule, too."

Flinging the musket onto the table,

Dick put out his hands in a gesture of pleading.

"Don't talk that way, Arabella—don't, fer Gawd's sake! Ain't you got no heart a-tall?"

Stepping close to him, she raised her face to his.

"Yes, I got a heart, Dick," she said in seductive tones. "Once you said I was *all* heart. But it's a woman's heart, Dick, and it takes a *man* to hold that!" She pressed still closer. "Dick, do you remember the night afore you went West? 'Member how I let you kiss me for the fust time? Tell me—did I have a heart then?"

He was trembling like a leaf now.

"Don't, Arabella!" he begged. "Yo're killin' me!"

A sense of victory thrilled her, but she did not betray the fact to him. Pointing to the door, she said firmly:

"You got to choose, Dick. You got to shoot that polecat comin' up the trail ur lose me! Choose!"

He wavered, and her hands went to his collar, caressing lightly the swollen cords of his neck. The hoofbeats were drawing nearer. She knew that the crucial moment had come.

"Ain't I wuth it?" she breathed, pressing her warm young body to his. "Ain't I wuth it—killin' a reptile what stole the only kiss *you* didn't get? Ain't I?" She took his damp face between her palms and bored his eyes with her hot, insistent ones. "Ain't I wuth it, Dick?"

His arm went about her and, straining her to him, he bent and tried dumbly to kiss her. But she deftly twisted her mouth out of the way. The hoofbeats were almost at the door. She played her trump card.

"You wanten kiss me, Dick?" she husked, nudging his cheek with her teeth. "You wanten kiss me—like you uster?" He groaned an inarticulate assent. The hoofbeats had stopped at the door and there was a creaking of sad-

dle leather as the mule's rider swung to the ground. Arabella pointed to the door. "It's him ur me, Dick—him ur —"

She felt herself hurled aside as the huge form of Devil Anse came bounding in at the doorway.

Anse halted short a yard inside of the door, a look of fear crossing his repulsive face. For Dick had grabbed up the musket, as he threw Arabella out of the way, and it was leveled from the hip, the yawning black muzzle pointing straight for Anse's vitals.

"You onnery polecat," thundered the man he would have cheated, "say yore prayers to yore Gawd, if you have one—fer I'm going to send a slug plumb through yore dirty black heart, and this is the last chance to pray yo'll aiver have!"

Anse's face became muddy white.

"That's right," he whined. "Shoot a man when yo' catch him 'thout a gun! That's the way all the Slades fight!"

Dick stiffened. For an instant he stood irresolute; then, with a snap of his jaws, he tossed the musket onto the table.

"It is, is it?" he retorted grimly. "Then show me how the *Cavendars* fight!"

He took a long, quick stride toward his enemy and put up his hands to meet the expected attack. But a wild gleam had come into Anse's pig eyes and his right hand flashed to his hip, returning with a long hunting knife. He leaped, but Dick succeeded in capturing the knife wrist and holding him off.

"Quick, Arabella—a knife!"

On a shelf at the end of the room lay a keen-edged Bowie. In a moment Arabella had procured it. Reaching behind him, Dick felt the firm handle of the knife pressed into his hand. At once he became the aggressor.

It was a struggle of giants, with death dancing from haft to tip of the

keen-edged blades. Back and forth across the floor the men fought, panting, neither seeming to have the advantage. Anse was the heavier of the two, but clean living had made Dick more supple. Once Arabella tried to trip Anse, but a cry from Dick sent her leaping back. Then Anse's feet shot out from under him and he fell heavily. Dick allowed him to regain his feet. As he rose, his knife ripped treacherously up inside Dick's guard, coming within an inch of giving him victory. But it also proved his undoing. As the arm drove upward, it left

unprotected his own breast, and instantly Dick's knife went home, burying itself to the hilt. Clutching at the protruding handle and coughing hollowly, Anse sank to the floor, rolled over once, and lay still.

With a joyful cry, Arabella sprang to her lover's side. His arms opened to receive her.

"You were right, gal," he panted. "You were right! The code o' the hills was best fer us!"

"Yes, man," she thrilled, slipping her arms up round his neck and raising her lips to meet his. "Take—yore—kiss!"



ONLY BIRDS

ONLY birds?

So the people idly say,
Callous souls of workaday,
Heedless of each magic strain,
Falling like a silver rain
From the cloudy new green leaves
Whereof waxing sunshine weaves
Vernal vesture for the boughs
That the singing birds may house.

Only birds?

Rather Nature's winged words
Set to harmonies of heaven.
Hark them fluting morn and even
Loud or low, in chorus clear
"Come to greet the waking year?
Happy buds are bursting wide,
All the thrilling countryside.
By each breadth of springing grain,
Know that Life has come again,
Victor over Death and Frost
In the strife, aye won—and lost."

Earthlings, in the waxing year,
List, O list, the flutings clear,
So your hearts may be of cheer.
If the birds forgot to sing,
Where were heralds of the spring?

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



The Valley of Paradise

By Rip Van Dam



IN St. Mark's Place, where the Bowery begins, Fulke halted. A stranger in New York, he was homeless, penniless, famished, and proud. These conditions have a synonym—death. But Fulke was too young to want to end it yet. Besides, there was a shop still open—that is to say, a chance. He took it and entered.

The shop, wainscoted with books, drearily lighted by gas, was tenanted by a man with the beard of a patriarch and a ferret's restless eyes.

Those eyes fastened on Fulke.

"Where have I seen you before?"

Fulke stared.

"I haven't the time for conundrums."

"Or the ability. What do you want?"

"Work."

"Glutton! Have you any book learning?"

"A little."

"Here, now, no boasting! Know any German or Yiddish?"

Fulke shook his handsome head.

"With other tongues I have a speaking acquaintance."

The old man did not seem to hear. He was looking him over. Then abruptly he asked:

"Were you ever in Valparaiso?"

Fulke sketched a gesture.

"Everybody goes there now and then."

"How now and then?"

"In dream. Valparaiso means 'Valley of Paradise.'"

The old man tugged at his beard.

"I could have sworn I had seen you before, and it was not in paradise, either."

Fulke took off his hat.

"At least you see me now. My name is Fulke Lunell, and I am your very obedient servant."

"Lunell! That isn't it! Have you any relatives named Robinson?"

"I haven't a relative in the world."

"Any Robinsons in the grave, then?"

"Not even a Crusoe."

The old man shifted.

"I tell you what. I need an assistant—at four dollars a week."

Fulke smiled. His head was swimming. Behind his belt was the gnaw of a swarm of rats. None the less, he smiled.

"You overvalue my poor services, Mr.—er?"

"My name is O'Shaughnessey. Four dollars a week and supper thrown in. We have bread and cheese every night except on Sunday, and then we have cheese and bread."

Fulke bowed.

"Sir, you are a voluptuary."

"Tut, tut! You can't tell me where I have seen you before?"

"Hunger is fatal to the imagination. Moreover, your Epicurean mention of bread and cheese has made my mouth champagne."

"What have you had to-day?"

"The same as yesterday. Air."

The old man turned and called:

"Kate!"

Beyond, at the farther end of the shop, a door opened and a girl appeared. Instantly she seemed to elongate immeasurably. At once she vanished. The shop, the books, the old man, vanished with her.

Fulke had fainted.

In a struggle with the intangible and the void, in a rush of returning consciousness, during which he tried to determine who he was and what it was all about, Fulke swam up. Then he knew. Unsteadily he got to his feet and diagnosed it.

"I must have overeaten."

"Here!" the old man was noisily telling him. "You have no right to do that! Coming in here and frightening my daughter!"

Fulke turned to the girl, who he saw was alarmingly pretty.

The old man motioned.

"Take him in there. His name is Fulke Lunell. Or at least so he says."

Not frightened as her father had declared, but shyly, with candid, compassionate eyes, she led the way into a room which, Spartanly plain, was full of the perfume of Arcady.

Fulke's thin nostrils quivered. The fragrance was the odor of onion soup. Jasmine, new-mown hay, the breath of June, honeysuckle and lilac—no, not one of them could compare with it.

But now she had him seated. She was ladling it out, a dark bliss in which floated Parmesan and soft toast. A moment only. It had gone. She ladled more, ladled herself a little, and put some on a plate before which the old man sat down. Comfortably he considered Fulke.

"For years I was on Eighth Avenue. But—well—I got tired of it and took to bookselling here. That's my story. What's yours?"

Fulke put down his empty spoon.

"My story is longer. I am a bookmaker."

The old man bristled.

"Bookmaker! What sort of a trade is that! Gambling and sharpening——"

"Father!" the girl protested.

Fulke, who was feeling better, laughed.

"I mean I make books or, anyway, I am trying to. I have written a novel."

The old man sat back.

"That's different. What do you call it?"

"The Prisoner at the Bar."

"Eh?" the old man muttered. But in the mutter was a note querulous, quarrelsome, and high.

Abruptly he stood up, touched Fulke on the shoulder, and added:

"Come here."

Fulke, too, got up and followed him into the shop, where the old man, turning, closed the door, faced him, and whispered fiercely:

"You're spying on me!"

In sheer surprise, Fulke fell back.

"Now who sent you? Who——"

"But, my dear sir, I happened in on you by the merest accident. I came asking for work and fainted from hunger. I don't know much about spies, but I hardly think they go that way about it."

"They might."

For a moment, his head bent, the old man considered the possibility.

But Fulke was at him.

"It remains for me to thank you and take myself off."

The old man straightened.

"Wait a bit. My life is an open newspaper. Now what I said was just—well—it was just——"

Amiably Fulke helped him.

"I see. It was a test. If you are to employ me, you want to be sure that I am honest."

"That's it. You've hit it."

Fulke nodded.

"I don't owe a dollar except at a lodging house, where they have a trunk of mine for security. My novel is in it. When I can get it out, I'll show it

to you. Crooks and spies don't write novels. They live them."

The old man nodded also.

"I guess you're right."

"You might even say a writer."

But, still unassured, the old man cocked a cautious eye.

"In this novel of yours, now, there is nothing, is there, about stealing—well—old anchors and suchlike?"

"Certainly not. It's all plain sailing."

"Or—or—about throwing orphans and widows overboard?"

"No. Nothing fishy in it."

"Or finding things and keeping dark about them?"

Fulke patted a smile.

"I hope it is too bright for that."

The old man sighed—with relief, perhaps—and turned.

"Then come back and finish your supper."

A moment or two later, when Fulke was again seated, this time before bread and cheese, the old man got back at it.

"Let me see. You didn't say, did you, what your novel is about?"

Between bites, Fulke told him.

"A man tried for a crime which he did not commit."

For the first time, the old man laughed.

"Not to go too far back, that story must have been told in the year one."

Fulke took another bite.

"I dare say. But in my story the man who committed the crime was on the jury."

"You don't tell me?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you something else. That soup was Sardanapolean and this cheese is Louis XV."

"You talk as if it was a rare edition. It is quite fresh, though. Now, where are you going to-night?"

"To the beautiful stars and the nearest bench."

The old man tugged at his beard.

"I guess your lodging house is better. Now I tell you what. I'll pay you for

two weeks in advance, and you come here to-morrow at ten. No use coming earlier. No one comes before that, and sometimes no one comes at all. Did you say that you are a stranger here?"

"I did not, but I am. I was born in Mettapoissett, near Boston. My father and mother——"

"Mettapoissett, now," the old man interrupted. "I don't seem to have heard of it. Any Robinsons in the neighborhood?"

"Robinson? Robinson?" Fulke wonderingly repeated. "I have heard that name somewhere and not long ago, either." He looked up, then down. "There! I've got it. At my lodging house, the day before yesterday, a little man was boasting that he could eat and drink if he had the price and, as I like to do all the evil that I can, I helped to it. Then he told me that his name is Robinson. Is he your friend?"

O'Shaughnessey twisted.

"Heaven forbid! And see here, I wouldn't have anything more to do with him. A dead beat, that's what he is." He hesitated and resumed. "No, if I ask so many questions, it is because—well, in New York references are usual."

"Sorry," Fulke negligently, but pleasantly replied, "I can't furnish any."

The old man turned on him.

"Why not?"

"I am just out of prison."

Timidly, but incredulously the girl looked up.

The old man started.

"You must be exaggerating, eh?"

Fulke smiled at them both.

"Yes, though I don't see how you got it. I escaped two months ago."

At that, instead of crossing himself, the old man looked at the ceiling and at something above it, which was visible to no one else. Then angrily he turned again.

"Then that novel of yours is all bunkum."

"All true," Fulke agreeably corrected. "It is my own story. The juryman afterward broke his back and, before dying, confessed. That's how I got out."

"Stop it!" the old man cried at his daughter.

But the girl, who was merely drying her eyes, said gently:

"It must have been so dreadful!"

"Oh," said Fulke, whom those eyes and their wetness profoundly affected, "I really did not mind very much. Besides, a danger escaped is very talkative. My novel is the result."

The girl sighed.

"But that wicked juryman! How you must have hated him!"

Fulke, covering her eyes with his own, shook his head.

"I loved him. Didn't he give me a plot? You don't know what an author is, Miss O'Shaughnessey. To be sure, I don't either," he hastened to add. "I haven't got there yet."

The old man pounded the table.

"No, but with your escaped-convict talk, you are enough to frighten a scarecrow."

With an air of great innocence, Fulke took it up.

"It would be uncivil of me to agree with you."

But the little jest missed fire. The scarecrow was leaving the room.

The girl raised her candid eyes.

"You spoke of your mother, Mr. Lunell. Are you like her?"

"I wish I were. It is my father whom I resemble."

"And your mother is still living, I hope."

"Unfortunately not. As for my father, I don't know."

Meditatively the girl brushed a crumb.

"You were named after him, I suppose."

"No," Fulke, taking a final bite, replied. "His name was Ralph. I——"

"What's all this?" the old man, reappearing, inquired.

In his hand were a few dollar bills, which he put down before Fulke, who got up.

"I was speaking of my father. It is seven years since I heard from him." He gathered up the money. "Thank you very much. I'll be here to-morrow at ten. Good night, and thank you, too, Miss O'Shaughnessey."

With eyes that caressed the girl, he shook the old man's hand. In a moment he had gone.

The girl watched him go. Then thoughtfully she busied herself with the dishes.

"Seven years!" the old man repeated. "Seven!" The commonplace syllables seemed to resolve themselves into an incantation. "Seven!"

Absently he looked about, left the room, climbed a stair, unlocked a door, entered another room, lit the gas, mounted a chair, ran a finger along a beam, touched a spring, pressed it, and from an aperture which then disclosed itself extracted a wallet of faded red leather on which was stamped: "Sylvester Robinson."

Getting down, he sat on the chair, opened the wallet, and from it took a photograph and a bank book, a performance not otherwise remarkable, for he had done the same thing every night for years.

The bank book showed to his credit one hundred and sixteen thousand, three hundred and forty-nine dollars and eighty-one cents, a balance that for seven years had been accumulating and from which, it also showed, not one reckless penny had ever been withdrawn.

At the sum total he looked, looked at the photograph, pocketed the latter, thought and stared. Far into the night, the old man stared and thought.

In the Bowery, meanwhile, Fulke entered the Valley of Paradise. In St. Mark's Place, Kate, too, had wandered there. Both were dreaming of the land where dreams come true.

Incidentally, Fulke had recovered his trunk and with it a small and evil den from which, the next morning, shaved, freshly clad, and incredibly light-hearted, he was hurrying down and out when, in the greasy hall below, a grimy little man attacked him.

"Hello! Going to give the girls a treat?"

Fulke, stopping short, bleakly surveyed him.

"Sir, I don't know you."

"Hello!" the little man, standing on one foot, laughed and exclaimed. "You save my life and forget my existence! What kind of behavior is that? I was up against it and you loaned me a dollar. I would have repaid you before, but I didn't have it."

"Excellent reason," Fulke, a little mollified, replied. "I remember you now. You are Mr. Robinson. An——"

"Bully for you! I ain't much on faces, but—hello!—you beat me at it."

"You flatter me," Fulke retorted. "But as I was about to say, an angel mentioned your name last night."

The little man hopped.

"A what?"

"An angel with a beard. He asked if I knew any one named Robinson."

"Hello! That was your chance to boast. How did it happen?"

Briefly Fulke summarized the episode.

The little man hopped again.

"You fainted from hunger after giving me money! Why, hello! Confound you, it must have been your last cent!"

Fulke flushed.

"It was indecent of me to tell you. But I had forgotten the trifling loan. My employer, Mr. O'Shaughnessey, advanced me——"

8

"O'Shaughnessey! Is that your angel? A grocer man?"

"No, he sells books."

"It's all the same—only less digestible. Where does he live? Take me to him at once."

As the little man spoke, his eyes glittered like gems.

Bleakly again Fulke surveyed him.

"I'll do nothing of the sort."

"You won't? Why not?"

"He doesn't want to see any Robinsons. He told me so."

"Gammon! He has been advertising for me."

"In that case, you have his address. Good day."

"But hello! Hold on! He moved before I saw the advertisement. I've been hunting for him ever——"

"Then you can keep at it. He did me a good turn. I won't repay him by producing you. Good day."

Fulke, his head in the air, stalked out into the Bowery, stalked on, ignorant that he was being stalked, and, at one minute to ten precisely, entered the shop, where, in lieu of the old man, he found the girl, who, at sight of him, blushed.

"Father is upstairs," she told him.

"And how did you sleep?"

"Beatifically. I dreamed that my mother was praising me to some one whom I would not like to mention."

The blush deepened.

"Father, just now, was praising you, also."

"And may I suppose you differed with him?" Fulke wickedly inquired.

The girl lowered her eyes.

"I would not venture to."

"What's all this?" Fulke heard some one calling at him and, turning, saw O'Shaughnessey, who, however, immediately addressed some one else.

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

"To learn something to my advantage," Fulke heard a now familiar voice

reply and, turning again, beheld the grimy little man.

"I told you to keep off," Fulke angrily threw at him. He turned once more. "Mr. O'Shaughnessey, this is the Robinson that——"

But already the little man was in and at it.

"Hello, my friend! I'm the party for whom you advertised."

The old man leaned against a shelf. For a second he closed his eyes.

In that second, he relived years, of which the initial episode was a railway wreck, his own escape, his effort to rescue a man pinioned in a twisted seat that was holding him on a grill of flame. The man was dying, but even in his agony he had known what he was about. With practically his last gasp, he had indicated a pocketbook and said: "Give this to——" Then he had fallen back, his clothes on fire, leaving no other evidence of identity than the pocketbook on which the name Sylvester Robinson was stamped and in which, together with a photograph of himself, there was nearly a hundred thousand dollars.

The vision passed, and the old man saw himself advertising for Sylvester Robinson's next of kin, advertising vainly, advertising for years. Then, from hoping that the heirs would appear, little by little he had begun to hope they would not. From regarding the money as a trust, he had begun to look at it as his daughter's. The advertisements had ceased. He had changed his address. From the West Side, he had moved to the East. He had done everything but change his name.

During the second in which he relived it all, he wished that he had. A second only. Though it were to save the nation, he could not help being square.

"Hello!" the little man was shouting. "Wake up! Fire ahead! What am I

to learn to my advantage? I'm listening."

Others are, too, the old man thought, and, motioning at Kate and Fulke, he told them to go into the other room.

"Now then, fire ahead," the little man repeated. "Go on."

O'Shaughnessey tugged at his beard. "It is for you to go on. What relation—if any—are you to Sylvester Robinson?"

The little man squared himself.

"What relation—and if any, did you say? Why, great Scott! I'm Sylvester Robinson myself!"

Dubiously the old man blinked.

"You don't look like him."

"I don't? I don't look like myself? Hello! For the Lord's sake! Who do you think I do look like? Your grandmother?"

O'Shaughnessey, fumbling in a pocket, drew out the photograph which he had put there the previous night. He looked at it, looked at the little man, showed it to him, and, with the same dubious air, resumed:

"Not in the least."

Robinson glanced at it, peered closer, and laughed.

"Hello! Of course not. You're right. That's not yours truly. But all in the family, as you might say. That bloke's my partner and a precious bad lot, too. He cut for Chile and made it hot for me. He owes me five thousand dollars. Yes, sir! That's why you advertised, eh? What?"

The old man put the photograph back in his pocket and shook his head.

"No. That is not the reason. I know nothing of you and less of your affairs. I advertised for the next of kin of Sylvester Robinson, because of some property which was intrusted to me for them. You may be a Sylvester Robinson, but you can't be your own next of kin, and anyway you are not the next of kin that I was looking for. Good day to you."

Angrily the little man threw it back. "Good day yourself! You can't do me like that. See here, now! If I'm not my partner's next of kin, then so much the better. I'm his creditor, and debts come first."

The old man coughed.

"Why did you speak of Chile a moment ago?"

"Why? Because he wrote to me from Valparaiso. That's in Chile, isn't it? He said that he had made good, that he was coming back to settle up—and down. And high time, too."

Meditatively the old man leaned against the shelf.

"He did settle down—what was left of him—that is, if we are talking of the same party and I don't know at all that we are. He settled down in six feet. He was killed in a railway accident. He died in my arms."

"Hello! You don't say so. I thought he'd been lynched."

"As for the photograph, it was in a pocketbook which——"

"Hello! Red leather? With my name on it? He got it away from me to hold that five thousand dollars."

O'Shaughnessey tugged at his beard.

"Sir, I must admit that your description of the pocketbook is exact. Moreover, the imprint on the back of the photograph shows that it was taken in Valparaiso. But——"

"Hello!" the little man shouted. "Hurrah, boys!"

O'Shaughnessey cut him short.

"But that only gives you the ghost of a claim."

"Hello! Ghost did you say? What do you take me for? A phantom or a mummy?"

"For all I know, you may be a mind reader. But I do wish you would not mistake me for a telephone. That 'Hello! Hello!' of yours is giving me a headache."

"Then accept my smelling salts—I mean my apologies."

The old man shifted.

"Now when was it that you heard from your partner?"

"Seven years ago by the clock."

"Well, you'll establish your claim when you produce his letter."

At that the little man's eyes glittered like mica.

"But see here! You can't expect me to stand and deliver a letter which now would be seven years old and small of its age. No, sir."

Wearily O'Shaughnessey shrugged a shoulder.

"I expect nothing of you. You come in here in a post-mortem manner and expect me——"

"But," the little man, dancing with excitement, got in, "I couldn't come sooner. It was only in getting back an overcoat which I had hocked that I found your advertisement in a newspaper that my uncle had stuffed with tar balls in the pocket. Nothing post-mortem about that, eh?"

O'Shaughnessey gestured.

"It is three years since I last advertised."

"And it is two years since I ransomed that coat. I have been praying for you ever since. You wouldn't have me desert you now, would you?"

The old man mopped his forehead.

"Well, I may think worse of it. Look in another day. I'll talk it over with my assistant."

As he spoke, he turned.

"Kate! Send Mr. Lunell in here."

"Lunell!" the little man feverishly exclaimed. "Is that the young chap that——"

But now Fulke, who, accompanied by Kate, had been enjoying himself hugely and losing no time over it either, came sauntering in.

Robinson dashed at him.

"Is your name Lunell? Were you born in Mettapoisset? Was your father's name Ralph? Did he cut up

didos and then vamoose? Hello! Are you dumb?"

"Not in the least. But I don't understand your interest in my affairs or your acquaintance with them, either."

Fulke, in speaking, advanced, and before him Robinson, as if doing a turn, walked backward.

But it was very menacingly that Fulke advanced, and when he again spoke, which he did at once, his voice and the tone of it grated.

"In Boston a man presumed to speak ill of my father. I heard of it and swore that I would do for him. Before I could, some one else, for other reasons, got at him. None the less, because of my threats, I was the one they went for. I was tried and convicted. Now, before I am sent up again, let me warn you to keep a civil tongue in your head. Otherwise I'll smash it."

Sylvester Robinson, sidling behind O'Shaughnessey, pulled at him.

"Show the young ruffian who saved my life that photograph."

Suspiciously the old man turned on him.

"What are you doing behind me? Get out."

From the shelter Robinson pleaded.

"Show it to him."

"What is it?" Fulke, striding up, inquired.

O'Shaughnessey, again getting out the photograph, handed it to him.

Fulke took it, looked, stared, and exclaimed:

"As I am a sinner!"

"Do you know who it is?" O'Shaughnessey asked.

"Do I? I should say so! That's my father. In my trunk I have a duplicate that he sent me from Lima."

"How long ago?"

"Seven years."

O'Shaughnessey smoothed his beard.

"I suspected as much last night. But I don't envy you."

Threateningly Fulke considered him.

He did not, however, alarm the old man, who added:

"No, I don't envy you. You are worth—— Let me see—a hundred and sixteen thousand, three hundred and fifty, minus five thousand—— You are worth a little over a hundred and eleven thousand dollars—less executors' fees and what I paid for advertising, and that comes to——"

At times, to exceptional beings, a hand, issuing from nowhere, will offer a cup sparkling with madness, filled to the brim with foaming delights. For a moment, and for a moment only, Fulke felt as if he were draining that cup. Then at once his common sense asserted itself. He swallowed and said:

"Well, Mr. O'Shaughnessey, I'll get to work now and clean the shop." He paused and added: "If I write another novel, I'll ask you to collaborate."

He turned to go. O'Shaughnessey stayed him.

"Your father made me his executor. It is true, he had no choice."

"Minus five thousand, you said," the little man hastily put in. "That's wrong. There's the interest. At four per cent, or say five, that would be ——"

O'Shaughnessey scowled.

"I got two and a half, as my bank book will show, and latterly, I am free to admit, I had hoped to invest it for my daughter. But now!"

With lifted eyes, he sighed and turned to Fulke.

"Mr. Robinson, here, was your father's partner."

Fancy a blind man dazzled. That is the way in which Fulke looked from one to the other. Together they fed him the details. At last he realized that the money really existed, that it was actually his. But in draining the magic cup again, he drew the old man aside.

"I can't accept it. I can't and won't."

Sternly the old man surveyed him.
 "You won't? I say you will. You've got to. It's yours."

But Fulke motioned at the other room.

"The only human being except my mother who ever shed a tear over me is your daughter. I won't take the money unless she will take me, too."

That, though, was too much. The old man shoved him.

"Here! Get along with you! I never heard such nonsense!"

But subsequently he heard more of it. In the interim Kate did also. Afterward, so, too, did Sylvester Robinson, who, his claim admitted and paid, and grimy no longer, danced at the wedding that followed.

"The Prisoner at the Bar" later appeared. Generally it was ignored. But later still Fulke brought out another novel that made a hit. Lovingly dedicated to his wife, it was only less lovingly entitled: "The Valley of Paradise."

THE WOMAN SPEAKS

A Sonnet in Dialogue

CORYDON.

TO test my love? Then be it so, Ninette.
 What shall it be?

NINETTE.

A test to tense a heart
 Of oak, to blanch the cheek, to bring the dart
 Of pain——

CORYDON.

Relieve my strained suspense, coquette.
 Say on!

NINETTE.

'Twill try the stoutest soul, and yet
 One would not think——

CORYDON.

Oh, speak! When does it start,
 This test? My nerves——

NINETTE.

Then learn the graceful art
 Of silence when a woman speaks, and let
 Me tell you of the proof of love I ask.
 You know that skirts are short this year? A snare
 For willing eyes——

CORYDON.

Yes, yes, go on!

NINETTE.

I knew

That you had noticed it! This is your task:
 To walk the streets and gaze into the air.
 Then will I know your love is really true.

LYON MEARSON.



The Man Who Broke the Rule

By May Edginton

Author of "The Woman Who Broke the Rule,"
"He That Is Without Sin," etc.

CHAPTER XIX. (Continued).

SHE knew where Harrison slept. The house slumbered, and the upper corridor was full of moonlight when Dorice went down it to his door. First she knocked many times low and insistently, until that light, yet steady drumming, which seemed like the mutter of thunder in her own ears, must, she thought, have penetrated to any sleeper's brain. But it did not wake Lance Harrison; so she turned the handle and went in.

The moonlight flowed through the light blinds so that she could distinguish plainly the outline of the bed. She stood near and said quietly:

"Lance, wake up!"

But she had to go and put her hand upon his shoulder before she could rouse him.

Harrison sat up and saw his dreams, embodied, standing by his bedside. In a moment he stretched out his arms; in another, he recollected himself, cried in an amazed whisper, "My God!" and leaped out of bed. He stood there, barefoot, in his pajamas, stammering:

"Dorice—Dorice—what's the matter? Go out, darling, and I'll come."

"I want you," said Dorice steadily. "I must talk to you."

The young man was staggered almost out of his senses. He put out a hand and caught one of the gold plaits and lifted it to his lips, but Dorice

swept it away from him before the kiss could be given, and her white anger brought itself to his attention.

"What is it, Dorice?"

"I want to talk to you, I said."

"To-morrow——"

"Now."

"Not here, Dorice. We'll go downstairs, if there's anything you must say, dearest."

"I don't care where we talk," said she recklessly.

"But I do," he said, suddenly very grave. "Come, darling. Are you warm enough in that thin thing? Are you sure? Then we'll go down to the smoke room, and I'll give you something to drink. I believe you want just a nip of brandy."

"I don't want anything," said Dorice, from her desolate heart.

"What's the matter, love? Come quietly, or we'll be heard."

"I don't care who hears us."

"But I do," he whispered.

Dorice went like a wraith out of the room and down the corridor, Harrison dragging on his dressing gown as he followed. At the stairhead, he caught up with her and slid his arm through hers, but with the same passion with which she had caught away her hair, she snatched away her arm.

"Dorice!" he stammered, amazed, and fearing like a devotee before the wrath of God. He added humbly and

appealingly: "It's so dark, sweetheart. Let me just guide you down."

"I am all right. I can go alone."

She groped her way down, and he groped beside her, which confused her, somehow; and halfway down she stumbled and would have fallen, had he not caught her, sensing her peril in every fiber of his thrilling body, and carried her the rest of the way, mutely resisting, in his arms. He pushed open the smoke-room door, set her down, and lighted a lamp—and looked at her.

"Dorice, sit down, sweetheart. You're a bit upset. I'll get you just the merest nip——"

"No—please."

"Yes, please."

"I won't drink it."

Harrison shrugged his shoulders slightly, smiling anxiously. There was something about her more serious than mere petulant whim; something that looked out of her eyes at him, stonily and accusingly. A silence fell between them, which she would not break. It seemed that he was to begin; so he began, kneeling down beside her, taking her cold hands and stroking them.

"What is it, Dorice? Tell me, there's a darling."

"Lance," said Dorice, looking into his eyes, "you have been married before?"

Harrison had given up, of late, imagining the manner of her possible reception of such news; he had postponed and postponed. Yet—he had never meant her to learn of this through a channel other than himself; and she deprived him, for a moment, of power to reply. Never in his life had he been so frightened.

"Dorice——" he murmured, looking down and stroking her hands, "Dorice——Dorice——"

"No," said Dorice. "Answer me."

Still he knelt there silent, not looking at her, until he heard her saying quietly, as if to herself:

"I suppose it is all true."

He glanced up swiftly into her eyes.

"Dorice, if it is true that I have been married before, does it matter? It can't make any difference, can it, my dear?"

"That depends," said Dorice slowly, her mouth dry, her hands cold, her heart laboring.

"Dorice—depends on what?"

"On——on—— Lance, I have several questions to ask you."

Now that the moment had come, Harrison recognized the futility of resisting it. Any manner of defense would be futile. He pleaded guilty, throwing himself on her mercy and desperately hoping for it.

"Ask," he said, "ask all the questions, Dorice."

"Promise to answer truly."

"I do promise to answer truly."

"If you did not," said Dorice, "you see, I should only go away and ask some one else. But I couldn't bear to do that."

Here she nearly broke down, and he saw it and was almost overcome himself. But she mastered her emotion, and that gave him the mastery of his own.

"Ask," he repeated, "ask everything, dear. I do promise to answer everything truly."

Dorice began, with horror, her inquisition.

"Is it true that you have been married before?"

"Yes, Dorice."

"How—how long ago?"

He tried to remember exactly; it was astonishing with what ease he had forgotten.

"It was about a year and four months ago—somewhere about that time, Dorice. If you want the exact date, I can find it for you."

"Your wife died, Lance?"

"Yes, Dorice."

"How long ago?"

"About eight months ago—yes, it was last Christmas."

"You've forgotten her very quickly, Lance."

"I had never forgotten you, you see, my Dorice."

"Don't say I'm your Dorice."

"Oh, my God, you don't mean——"

"There are more questions."

"Ask them. Ask anything to satisfy you."

"Lance, you forgot your wife so quickly—did you not love her, then?"

He remained silent.

"You did not love her," said Dorice, like a judge.

"No," Harrison replied.

"Then," Dorice said, drawing her cold hands from under his, "why did you marry her?"

Again Harrison became silent; he could not even ask that question of himself in formula of words, and now that she, so pitilessly, put it, he could not frame the only answer. At last he made a plea:

"I tried to make her happy."

Dorice thought this over for some time.

"Lance, I want to know how old she was?"

"I don't know."

"You have to tell me."

"I guessed—about forty-eight."

"That's exactly twice your own age?"

"Yes. Exactly."

"Then, Lance, was she beautiful? Because, sometimes, now and in history, women of forty-eight and fifty-eight and sixty-eight are so charming that they can still have lovers."

"She—she wasn't Ninon de Lenclos."

"Ah! Thank you, Lance."

Dorice then came back to the terrible question from which he had stupidly hoped this sidetrack would lead her.

"Why did you marry her?"

Harrison began to tell the truth; but

it was horrible on the tongue, and again he stopped. And once again Dorice dropped the question, for, apparently, another side issue.

"Lance, were you awfully poor when you met your wife?"

"I couldn't even pay my hotel bill."

"Hadh't you any prospects at all?"

"Not a ha'porth, Dorice."

"Did she know?"

"Yes. She knew everything."

"Did she pay your hotel bill?"

"Dorice! That's a damn' mean question!"

"I am talking of damnable mean things."

The word on her lips hurt him, while he took it as a commonplace of the day from other women. He made a sound of sorrowful protest, at which she smiled, but without mirth. She only repeated:

"Did she pay your hotel bill, then?"

"In a way—she did."

"Did she ask you to marry her?"

"It hardly matters who asked whom, does it, Dorice?"

"No," said Dorice. "I'm sorry I asked that. You married her at once, did you, Lance?"

"In a day or two."

Dorice uttered a cry.

"Lance, when we first met—were you—you were *not*—oh!—you were *not* on your honeymoon?"

"We were on our honeymoon."

"The woman I spoke of as your mother——"

"Was my wife."

"You allowed me to be deceived! You did not tell me even then!"

"Because I loved you so, from the first moment."

Then for the third time, unsoftened, Dorice put the great and bitter question:

"Why did you marry your wife?"

Harrison still kneeled by her, beseeching; he passed his tongue round

his lips and said to himself: "My God!"

There was no answer but the true one, and that was like Marah on his tongue. But at last, deviating a little from the short, straight way of it, he made the answer:

"I regretted it very soon, Dorice. It was hell."

"Why did you marry her?"

"A sort of impulse— Try to understand——"

"What prompted the impulse?"

Harrison burst out:

"Money! Curse and burn it! Money!"

Dorice rose, cold as ice, with a little wintry smile on her mouth.

"Thank you for telling me yourself."

Harrison sprang up and tried to touch her, but she seemed to melt away before his hand, so elusive was her shrinking.

"Dorice, forget!"

"I can't."

"Then, for God's sake, my dearest, forgive!"

"I can't, Lance. I couldn't ever forgive."

"What are women made of? I thought they could always be kind."

"What are men made of?"

Harrison could not answer this. He invited her only, with a kind of savage and bewildered despair, to do her worst.

"What do you think of me, Dorice?"

"You're the lowest thing made."

He stood still, listening, with a sigh. She broke into a fluency of rage and grief.

"I've trusted you so! Right from the beginning, I trusted you! And I've let you spend that money on me! I've eaten and drunk it at restaurants! I wear it!"

She wrested the diamond ring from her finger and tossed it down. She cried:

"You're a disgrace! Do you remem-

ber talking to me of marrying for money? I told you then what I thought. And still you deceived me! Every one knew but me; every one's been thinking: 'She doesn't care, if she gets the money.' I hate your money as I hate you! It's not yours. It belongs to that poor dead thing who paid too big a price for you. Oh, she paid so many times more than you are worth! Why will women do these things?"

"Men do them, too, and women sell themselves——"

"That's only a few degrees less horrible. You're contemptible, you and your money. Doesn't it ever hurt you when you spend it? Do you ever really forget how you came by it? In the lowest way a man can! And I thought—I thought—it was all so beautiful! I thought ours the finest story ever lived! It was like a fairy tale all coming true to a girl—seeing you first, and our meeting, and meeting again, and being engaged——"

"I—I wrote to you, when I left that hotel."

"You didn't tell me the truth."

"I didn't dare. I was ashamed."

"You may well be ashamed!" Dorice sat down again and wept, and once more he kneeled by her unable to help, not allowed to touch, groaning, "Oh, my God, don't! Oh, Dorice, try to forget and please forgive! I've learned such a lot since then! I'm sorry! Dorice, listen!"

Dorice would not listen. She sobbed:

"You meant us to live on that money!"

"I haven't any other."

"To eat and drink it, and buy my frocks with it, and hunt and entertain, and—bring up children on it——"

Harrison gave a cry.

"Oh, Dorice, forgive it all, and marry me! I do want you and your children! There's nothing else to live for!"

Dorice rose again, tearing her wrap-

per from his imploring grasp, and ran to the door, blinded with her tears.

"You're a cur!" she whispered. "A cad! I couldn't touch you! Don't follow me! This is the end!"

By the time Harrison, too, had staggered to his feet, the door was shut between them, and his quickened hearing caught the light fall of her flying feet upon the stairs. He spoke again, aloud, the Name to which all men turn in agony:

"Oh, God, what shall I do?"

A dreadful stillness, like a corporate thing walking in, invaded the room, sweeping away the impress of Dorice as if in obedience to her instruction, "This is the end." It was as if she would never return, never again bring sweetness to day or night.

For some time Harrison stood there, staring at the lamp on the table, as if seeking by its light to find other light; but it burned on, white, unhelpful. And all at once, as two clocks somewhere in the house struck together "One!" with a doleful toiling sound, he fell into a chair at the table and laid his head on his arms and wept, as Dorice had wept, only with greater difficulty, a man's exhausting tears.

The paroxysm left him played out, and he was too stricken to be ashamed of it. The breakdown did not bring to him the relief that such a collapse brings to a woman, but iron bands seemed to encompass his head, and his eyes ached and were very weary.

"I'm up against it!" he kept thinking stupidly. "I'm up against it! What in all the world will I do?"

He went carefully over all the resources, perfectly useless to his cause, in the house, and after a while he came to Dorice's mother. From his hitherto cocksureness, he now felt all astray, a novice at the gates of good women's hearts, an infant in understanding of their mysteries and minds. Humbly he groped out, and thought he would be

the better for advice. He had no pride left. He found, with a wonderful amount of effort and trouble, note paper and pens, and wrote to Mrs. Waymore.

It was difficult at first to find the words, but at last they came with a rush, and he dashed them down. He was there a long while, though, till dawn began delicately to streak the night; and while he sat there, haggardly writing the toilful letter, he heard no sound creep by the door, no footfall on the stair. He thought of Dorice crying herself to sleep, like a child, somewhere above him, and he could only be thankful that she was still in his house, for siege in the morning.

CHAPTER XX.

Dorice's sleepy mother had that hectic note by the hands of her maid at an unusually early hour in the morning for the lady to be disturbed. It was, in fact, seven o'clock. She would not have read the note till later, had not the maid added:

"Mr. Harrison is waiting in the corridor, madam."

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Waymore, rubbing her eyes.

The maid drew back the window curtains, and she read what Harrison had written, in his fever, the night before.

"Tell Mr. Harrison he may come in in three minutes," she said to the maid. She turned to her husband: "Henry, wake up. You're to go into your dressing room while I see Lance, or you can have your bath, but you can't stay here."

"What's up?" asked Waymore.

She gave him the note, and he went, with a long whistle of dismay. At his dressing-room door, he paused and looked around to say:

"Put it right, old girl. You will put it right, won't you?"

"Don't expect miracles," replied his wife tartly, as she took up the hand mirror that lay on the bedside table and touched the curls that wandered carefully from beneath her becoming cap. Then she smoothed her crumpled pillow, lay back on it gracefully, and called: "Come in, dear boy. Come in."

Harrison came in, blue white with his terror-stricken vigil. He was still in pajamas and dressing gown, and had the forlorn look of a tired, unshaven man in the early morning.

He stood by the bed.

"It's all up," he said hollowly.

"Sit down, my dear," replied Mrs. Waymore, all shrewd, quiet bustle. "Sit down on my bed and hold my hand and talk to me about it. You look half dead, my poor boy."

Harrison smiled a ghastly smile.

"I'd rather be whole dead, by far."

"Don't be so young, dear Lance," said Mrs. Waymore. "Now, are you quite comfy? Then tell me—what's all this?" With her unoccupied hand, she tapped the letter.

"Truth."

"But everything was all right, dear boy, when we all went to bed, wasn't it? Tell me all my naughty girl has been doing and saying."

"Don't blame Dorice," said Harrison bitterly. "She knows I've been married before, and to whom, and why, and every blessed thing about it, and——"

"Who told her?" said Mrs. Waymore. "Did you?"

"No. I meant to, but I hadn't. Did you?"

"No. I left it for you, dear boy. I never meddle, as you know. But when did this horrid quarrel take place?"

"Dorice came to my room about midnight——"

"What?" said Mrs. Waymore.

"——and woke me, and we went down to talk in the smoke room."

"A very rash thing to do in a household of people!"

"Dorice was too upset to think about that sort of thing."

"You should have thought."

"I did, till we began talking."

"If Dorice was upset," frowned Mrs. Waymore, "who could have upset her between eleven and twelve o'clock last night? It must have been Stelle Gatherby! The little viper!"

"The point is the effect knowing has had on Dorice."

"The point is how she was told, dear Lance. That's why we left it to you."

"It wouldn't have made any difference. The facts are there. She—she thinks I'm contemptible."

"Oh, dear! Dear me!" said Mrs. Waymore.

"She *knows* I am," said Harrison steadily.

"Few men," began Mrs. Waymore, "are so delightfully modest——"

"Stow it!" said Harrison. "You'll excuse my abruptness? I'm not out to deceive myself, or to want others to be deceived about me, any more. I'll confess to all I am and have been. But I'll promise, too, all I'm going to be; because, with Dorice, I'd have run straight always, over the littlest things as well as the biggest. I adore her."

"As we know," murmured Mrs. Waymore, kindly looking away and patting his hand.

"But she won't marry me."

"Oh, yes, yes, she will. She'll come round. I dare say she was angry because you hadn't told her yourself, you know."

"It isn't that. It's the money. She wouldn't touch a penny of it now."

Mrs. Waymore was thinking much, but all she uttered of her thoughts was:

"Dorice will know, when she stops to consider, that her engagement can't possibly be broken off now, with the wedding so near. People always blame the girl for fickleness like that."

"Please," said Harrison hoarsely, standing up, "will you go and see her now? That's what I came to ask you. I can't wait any longer to hear something further."

"My dearest boy, certainly I will. If you'll just go and say good morning to Henry—he's in his dressing room—I'll jump out of bed and go at once."

The lady was out and into a dressing gown and at the door almost before the young man had turned his back, so eager was she to right the wrong.

But almost before Harrison had opened the dressing-room door in response to Waymore's "Come in," she was back with a scared face.

"Henry," she said, "Lance! Dorice has gone!"

"Where?" replied Waymore brusquely, while Harrison just wiped his wet brow, mutely.

"To Minnie's," said his wife, speaking of her only sister. "At least, I think so. She's taken just a dressing bag, but she wrote a label, and blotted it, and I can read the address on the blotting paper. One holds it before a mirror, you know——"

"Don't talk so much," said her husband. "Dress and follow her quickly, there's a dear. She must have walked to the station and gone by the six-thirty."

"If you two men will leave my room," replied Mrs. Waymore tartly, "dressing quickly and following Dorice is just what I propose to do."

Waymore linked his arm kindly in Harrison's.

"Take me downstairs," said he, "and give us both a pick-me-up."

And while they had it, he talked friendlily, and with a very soothing confidence.

But Harrison knew his doom.

"You won't move her," he said.

The so recently prospective father-in-law to twenty-five thousand a year looked from the window at the hot and

misty morning and drummed his stubby fingers on the pane.

"It'll be a beautiful day for the birds," said he. "Of course neither her mother nor I would think of coercing the girl. But, my good chap, she'll see reason. I haven't a doubt of it."

"What is reason?" replied Harrison bitterly.

Waymore looked at him thoughtfully. Harrison continued:

"Her reason is better than ours. It's higher and clearer and diviner. Dorice knows what she's doing—but I wish to God she didn't!"

"My wife had better motor, hadn't she?" said Waymore, not answering him. "There's not another train to Wellsboro' till nearly midday. My sister-in-law lives there—Wellsboro' Park, in Notts, you know."

"She shall have the Daimler."

"She'll be there almost as soon as Dorice, I should think. Jolly surprise for Minnie to find 'em scrapping on her doorsteps!"

Harrison winced.

"I don't want any scrapping where Dorice is concerned."

"Figure o' speech merely," said Waymore hastily.

Harrison poured himself another libation, and Waymore accompanied him. The young man felt a little better under the spurious influence; his hands were steadier, and his face lost its blue-white tinge.

"You think there's hope for me?"

"My good chap," replied Waymore, "hope? There's absolute security, of course. I don't say you haven't to play the cards; you always have with women. But there's nothing that need put you off your shooting this morning; that I'll swear."

Eight o'clock saw Mrs. Waymore speeding on her road, and Harrison in his cold tub, buoyed by a hope that judgment told him to be useless.

Mrs. Waymore reached her daughter about two hours after noon.

Dorice had walked through the gates of Wellsboro' Park dead beat, for she had not breakfasted, and when she had arrived at the house, she just said to her Aunt Minnie:

"May I stay here till mother is ready to move on to the Clintons'? And may some one fetch my bag from the station, please?"

Aunt Minnie had not yet, therefore, asked any questions. As soon as she had remarked to herself that something was seriously wrong, she had, aloud and briskly, prescribed lunch; and the tired and hungry girl—for even sorrowful girls can be hungry if healthy—was at table when her aunt—who had kindly dispensed with servants and substituted her own tactful waiting—looked through the window and saw Harrison's Daimler dash up the drive, with her only sister seated therein.

"Good gracious, love!" said Aunt Minnie. "And now here's your mother!"

She hurried out to the hall, to receive Mrs. Waymore's first agitated inquiry:

"Minnie, is Dorice here?"

"The child is lunching," Aunt Minnie replied mildly.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Waymore, and, sinking into a hall chair, she wiped away the first tear or two she had as yet allowed herself to shed over the business, although she had a plentiful reserve on tap for the melting of Dorice.

Her sister had closed the dining-room door behind her and waved away the hovering butler. Confidentially she whispered:

"What is the matter?"

"Dorice has broken off her engagement," Mrs. Waymore replied.

"Good gracious!" cried Aunt Minnie. "And it was twenty-five thousand a year, wasn't it?"

"More, my dear. A good deal more, Henry says."

"It's disgraceful," said Aunt Minnie vigorously, "for girls to be so fickle."

Mrs. Waymore collected herself.

"I had better see Dorice at once, Minnie, and talk to her. And can the chauffeur have lunch? I'll have some, too. I hope to bring Dorice back with me in time for dinner, to save the necessity of telling any more lies."

"Where are you staying, then?"

"At young Harrison's place in Yorkshire, for the grouse, you know. They quarreled in the middle of the night."

Aunt Minnie screamed faintly.

"I can't go into details now," said Mrs. Waymore. "I have no time to spare. It was all perfectly respectable, of course, but is none the less tragic, if Dorice persists. He's been married before, you know——"

"That's where the money came from?"

"Exactly, my dear. And he hadn't yet told Dorice, and she found out somehow and has broken off her engagement."

"On what grounds?" said Aunt Minnie, raising her eyebrows.

"That's precisely what I am going to find out."

Mrs. Waymore entered the dining room, where Dorice, struggling for composure, was sipping Burgundy resolutely.

"My dear child!" Mrs. Waymore cried, and she kissed her, and let fall a tear or two over her. "What is all this fuss and worry? The anxiety you have caused us and poor Lance by this silly escapade!"

"It's no escapade, mother," said Dorice coldly, "and I'm making no fuss, and I'm not worrying at all, thank you. I hope no one else will do so. Aunt Minnie will let me stay here till you are ready to go on to the Clintons'——"

"But, Dorice, my love!" cried Aunt Minnie, who had followed her sister in.

"Yes, aunt?" replied Dorice.

"You will have to give a very excellent explanation for breaking off your engagement, if you really mean it," said her mother gravely, "and I don't think you are ready with one, darling."

"Confess," interpolated Aunt Minnie, struggling with the cold chicken she was dissecting for her sister, "that you acted on a foolish impulse, dear. You were out of temper and you didn't think."

"Young people in love do very silly things," added Mrs. Waymore.

Dorice looked at them both, and said slowly:

"But I am not in love."

The elder women glanced at each other interrogatively.

"Well, I'm sure, dear," said Mrs. Waymore, "your father and I thought it was a love match, or we should not have given our consent to it at all."

"Of course not, Dorice," said Aunt Minnie, not very credulously.

Dorice smiled faintly, coldly, and abstractedly. But she could not hold her knife and fork because her hands trembled so, so she hid them on her lap, where her fingers clasped each other agonizedly.

"What are your grounds for behaving so, Dorice?" her mother asked.

"You know, mother," said the girl, "and I should have known."

"I knew?"

"You knew long ago, and you should have told me long ago."

Mrs. Waymore changed color, and her eyes flickered before the younger accusing ones.

"I fail to understand you, Dorice," she said, mustering dignity. "Minnie dear, give me a little Burgundy. I left so early. I—I'm quite faint."

"See how you worry your mother, Dorice," said Aunt Minnie reproachfully, as she complied.

"I'm sorry," said Dorice. And she

wondered painfully when mercy would come to them, and they would cease to torment her.

"I knew you would be, darling," Mrs. Waymore murmured, wiping away a tear. "I told your father you would see reason and return with me before people talk."

"That is impossible, mother," said Dorice.

"You ought to remember, my dear," said Aunt Minnie, while Mrs. Waymore, with an air of distress, discussed her lunch, "that this is a matter to be considered most carefully from all sides."

"And yet you and mother consider it only from one side," replied Dorice.

Aunt Minnie was nonplused for a moment, and therefore extremely vexed. At last she said:

"You have no right to say that, Dorice. Your mother has a great deal of experience, and you should listen to her. You will wreck your life for a silly caprice if you are not careful."

"So I am being very, very careful," said Dorice.

"Nonsense, dear!" Aunt Minnie exclaimed. "You should really consider the position. From all I hear, Mr. Harrison is a very charming and good-hearted young man, whose only fault in your eyes, as far as I can discover, is that he contracted in extreme youth—poor fellow!—an unhappy marriage about which he hesitated to tell you. I admire his delicacy, and I have no doubt that he meant to tell you as soon as you were married."

"When delicacy would not matter?" Dorice replied.

Mrs. Waymore looked up from her chicken to exclaim: "Dorice, how crude!" while Aunt Minnie gave a little shocked cry before she continued:

"You are evidently beside yourself, my love. I repeat that you should really consider the whole position. It is essential, even from a worldly point

of view merely—though your dear mother is far from worldly—that you should make a good marriage. You know perfectly well that you will have very little of your own by and by, though we do not want to talk of that sad time, I'm sure. Mr. Harrison could have given you all you wish for, and all your parents could wish for; and he is evidently devoted to you, poor fellow, from all I hear, and true devotion, my dear, is not to be scorned. When you have lived as long in this wicked world as I have, you will have learned that."

"Do you think," said Dorice in a low voice, with her scorching eyes fixed on the tablecloth and her cold hands writhing in her lap, "that I would allow a penny of such money to be spent on me?"

"Such money, love?"

"Money—obtained—in such a way."

"What way?" said Aunt Minnie willfully.

"You know, and mother knows, and father, too; every one always knew, except me," replied Dorice. Then she lost her head with passion; and with a working face, she cried: "A man who marries a woman for money is no better than the woman who sells herself——"

Aunt Minnie stopped her ears; and Mrs. Waymore dropped her face in her hands; and Dorice, with a little stifled shriek of sheer hysteria, got up and ran from the room. She locked herself in her room and lay on the bed and sobbed until she was so tired that she could not have risen to open the door, through which her mother and aunt besought her vainly.

It was four o'clock before a subdued and pale Mrs. Waymore was admitted by a wan and passion-drained Dorice. The mother entered quietly then, without argument or protest or reproach, and, looking at the girl in whom a few hours had wrought such havoc, knew

that nothing further would avail with her. Mrs. Waymore read in Dorice's face far more than she could interpret, and so, for that time, she left the matter alone.

But she put her girl to bed, and tucked her up, and saw her tea tray brought, and kissed her patiently, before she departed, alone as she had come, in the Daimler.

She made the shooting lodge again at about eleven-thirty. Every one had retired, keeping country hours, save Lance Harrison and Henry, and they were pacing the gravel in front of the house, waiting for her. When the purring of the great car was heard at the gates, Lance ran to meet her, signaled the car to stop, and found her alone.

He had known, all day, that she would be alone, and yet the blow was terrible.

He leaned into the car and whispered thickly some hardly intelligible inquiry.

"I could not persuade her," said Mrs. Waymore, with baffled tears in her voice.

He stood aside without a word and signaled the car on. She reached her husband, and he came forward.

"Where's Dorice?"

"I can't do anything with her."

"Where's Harrison?"

"He—he's back there, in the drive."

Husband and wife stood in the darkness, after the glowing lamps of the great car had faded toward the garage, and watched the night for the young man's return.

"We'd better go after him," said Waymore.

"What's the matter?"

"He's very queer," said Waymore.

Mrs. Waymore began saying, as her tired feet pattered beside him:

"Oh, dear, dear! I hope he won't do anything! It's always remembered against a girl so!"

But before they had walked half a

dozen yards, Harrison emerged slowly from the darkness and met them. He seemed to search for something to say.

After a while: "You must be tired," he said to Mrs. Waymore.

"Yes," she murmured nervously.

"I'm sorry," said Harrison. "Thank you for all you've done."

She took his arm, and her kind woman's touch, shallow as the kindness was, did more for him than anything else in the world could have done at that moment.

"We'll go early to-morrow, Lance."

"Oh, don't!" said Harrison.

"My dear boy, it's the only thing we can possibly do."

"We're both awfully sorry," said Waymore.

"Perhaps," she added, "Dorice will come round yet. I'll do my utmost."

"She will not touch me," said Harrison, "and she's right."

CHAPTER XXI.

While Dorice and Lance fought out their bitter midnight battle, Nurse Reay was sleeping upon his letter, or, rather, she was not sleeping, but lying awake, burning upon it, angry and vengeful.

It had come to her in the morning, and she had read it with people around her, so that she had composed herself for some hours to enforced quiet. But the fire had smoldered. In the afternoon, when she had had her two hours off duty, she had gone out and sought, at a stationer's shop, through some of the society weeklies for Dorice Waymore's face. As Harrison had suggested, she had found it.

Already the newsmongers had fastened upon the Waymore-Harrison engagement, and Dorice's latest and most beautiful portrait held the front page. The prospective bridegroom, as usual, obtained the briefest mention, and was left to his obscurity; all the limelight was for the bride.

The nurse had bought the paper and, carrying it back to the hospital, had gone up to her room and shut herself there to pore over the face of the girl who had crossed her path. As she had looked, she had been full of reviling and resentment of life. She had thought:

"There she is, Miss Dorice Waymore, soft as butter, idle as a flower, taking my chance from me! Hasn't she many more? She's out in the world, baiting herself for the man catching, and I—here am I shut up day after day, working—working—"

As the nurse looked and looked again, her anger grew. She walked about her tiny room; she dashed the paper against the wall and hated it; gusts of fury visited her, like winds fain to sweep her off her feet.

Was it for this that she had dared greatly? Had she, for this Dorice Waymore, withheld that sheet of paper from the light—that sheet which carried the few last words of a dying woman, signed with that feeble dying signature and witnessed—yes, duly witnessed? The nurse stopped her walking up and down the narrow room, and, as she thought, she drew a long, astonished breath and her eyes filled with fire. She was astonished at her own power. She had in her hands the bestowal of the great Iron fortune.

Dorothy Reay exclaimed aloud:

"Yes, I have!"

The nurse was, before every other trait, a business woman; she had not destroyed the last will of Maude Iron as she might have done, with such purpose as hers in view, but she had kept it with a view to its value.

If she could not land her big fish, she might land a smaller one with safety. She had never supposed Lance Harrison to be a fool; in her estimation, his marriage put his sharp qualities beyond all doubt. What would he

not pay for that scrap of paper, even short of a wedding ring?

All this the nurse had thought out in her calculating mind. But here she was suddenly faced with a new side to the possible outcome of her deathbed machination. She was faced with the obstacle of her own jealous fury, which stood in her path to bar her approach to Lance Harrison with the will for private sale. Was it for another woman that she would commit felony?

At the word "felony," uttered even only in her own mind, she shuddered and was a little afraid. She began to scheme for self-extrication, and at the same time for a revenge that would sweep the bridal path like a tornado.

She sat down on the side of her narrow bed and looked around her. After her spacious dreams, the four walls of that tiny place seemed closer than ever; they closed in—and closed in—

Dorothy Reay sprang up again, with a stifled cry of wrath, and thrust her head from the window into the hot August air, to draw a long breath. She looked over crowding roofs into the clean spaces of the sky, and the feeling that she must take a journey away from all those roofs came to her like a prophecy. She paused a moment to put it into thought.

"I'll go up north," she said suddenly. "I'll go to that lawyer."

Her two hours of daily leisure had passed, and she returned to her duties. But late that night, before she went to bed, she sought the matron, who liked her, because she was clever and zealous.

"Matron," said Dorothy Reay, "may I put my next two months' half days together and take a whole day? I have to go up to Cheshire to see a lawyer on important business."

She wrote to Percy the next morning, very early, making a guess at his address, for he was a great man in his neighborhood. Her letter was such—

so cautiously and suggestively worded—that he wired to her instantly on its receipt. And the morning of the day after she read that wire found her on her way to Chester.

Percy had not forgotten her; she was not the kind of woman whom men forget altogether. She was the kind whom, years after a passing acquaintance—or, more likely, a casual lively episode—men remember with a sudden smile, and of whom they say to themselves confidentially, "That was a good-looking woman. What was her name? I wonder where she is now." Percy, who had less than even a slight acquaintance with her, had had much the same thought when he opened her letter. He had read it, and keen as had been his interest, he had sat back for a moment and smiled reminiscently and reflected:

"The good-looking nurse—a very fine woman. I wonder what she's been doing since she was at Ironsides?"

When Dorothy Reay was shown into his office, he looked at her with appraisal and approval in his face, although he kept his sedate manner. Her letter lay on his desk before him, and, referring to it, he said briskly:

"Well, nurse, good morning. Take that chair. What's all this?"

"Haven't you gathered from my letter, Mr. Percy?" said the nurse, with a slight, appealing smile.

Percy took it up, and quoted from it aloud:

"You feel it your duty to lay before me certain facts concerning Mrs. Harrison's last wishes as regards the disposal of her property. You are aware, now, that it seems rather late to do so, but had not understood the importance of a certain document which you held. Now, nurse, what is this document?"

Nurse Reay paused a moment to look at him well, before she answered with a straightforward effect:

"Mrs. Harrison's last will, Mr. Percy."

"What?" said Percy severely.

The nurse was a little tired with her journey—she had not lunched, and it was already two-thirty—and passion had overstrung her; so, strong as she was, she found her eyes filling naturally with tears at his brusqueness, and she made no effort to restrain them, for crying—a little, judiciously—did not spoil her.

Percy softened and fidgeted and said kindly:

"Tell me just in your own way, and at your leisure."

"I am sorry to be stupid," said Nurse Reay piteously, "but I'm very tired, and worried about this, and I haven't yet had lunch, and mine is a silly sex. We can't be absolute automatons, however hard we try."

Percy arose and fussed.

"Dear me!" he cried, putting a hand on her shoulder. "My dear Nurse—er—Nurse Reay, don't upset yourself." He patted the shoulder. "A glass of wine and a biscuit just while we talk—"

He found both from a neat private store somewhere about his desk.

"Now," said Percy, sitting down again and looking at her more softly, "now try to compose yourself and tell me all about it. Don't be frightened. I'm nothing to be afraid of, am I?"

"I don't know," the nurse faltered.

"I assure you I am not," said Percy, smiling.

The nurse smiled, too, with a touch of red in her cheek. She was not accustomed to wine, much as she enjoyed it, and a very little brought sparkle to her. She saw herself swimming easily through the story.

"You think me very stupid and annoying," she murmured.

"No, I don't," said the lawyer, patting her well-shaped hand. "We don't want women to be—what you say—

automatons, you know. You're all much more charming as you are. Now, do you think you could— Shall we have the story?"

"I'll give you the will at once."

"What?" he exclaimed. "Have you actually a second will in your possession?"

"If it is counted as a will," said the nurse, taking up the line she had carefully considered during the past two days, "I have. It is here."

Percy took the sheet of paper and read it through, and looked at the signature. He brought out a specimen signature of the testatrix, and compared it carefully with the one on the will, through glasses.

"Nurse," he said, in a grave, but kind voice, "you witnessed this yourself?"

"I did," said Nurse Reay meekly.

"It deprives young Harrison of everything, should he remarry."

"It's very sad," said the nurse.

"He's engaged, too. It's a pity that this did not come out at once."

"Oh, it's very, very sad," cried the nurse. "But I couldn't keep it any longer. I've worried over it night and day lately. It's hard to know what's best to do for everybody."

"Well, nurse," said the lawyer sympathetically, "I don't see what possible reason you could have had, you know, for withholding it so far."

"I thought it absolutely invalid. She was dying when she made it, and very excited. I had to write it to please her, or she would have screamed. But I never thought it meant anything."

"Well, well," said the lawyer. Once more he patted her hand, and looked at this poor, pretty woman very reassuringly. "Now, don't be afraid of my questions. But if you thought it meant nothing, why did you conceal it?"

"I didn't conceal it," replied the nurse piteously. "I just didn't mention it.

I only thought of it once, when you were reading the other will. But I didn't suppose it was valid, anyway, and I knew it would make a great deal if ill feeling, so I said nothing."

"Your notions were very kind, my dear girl," said Percy, "very kind indeed. But I have to ask questions—you understand that, don't you?"

"Please ask all possible questions, Mr. Percy."

"What made you keep it—this will which you thought a bit of waste paper?"

"I meant to show it to Mr. Harrison and ask him what I should do, so I put it away in my box. But, as you know, I left rather hurriedly."

The lawyer remembered. He had ordered the luggage cart for her and fairly ordered her to go. He stroked his chin.

"So you did," said he. "So you did. But you could have sent it to Mr. Harrison."

"I didn't wish to cause more worry and sorrow, when the will could not alter things."

"But the will can. It's valid, if you are prepared, in your professional capacity, to swear that the patient was in her right mind and absolutely uninfluenced."

"She was in her right mind, and entirely uninfluenced."

"What made you suddenly realize its significance, nurse?"

The nurse replied:

"I read a book lately, a novel. There was a similar case in it, and I suddenly realized what I'd done. And there was the will, still at the bottom of my trunk. And I wrote at once to you."

"Quite right," said the lawyer, "quite right."

"I hope I have done nothing criminal?" the nurse faltered.

"You have acted most bravely and straightforwardly," said Percy warmly. "A woman with less pluck would have

been afraid to come forward when she realized what it meant. May I give you some lunch?"

This was actually the first time, since his marriage five years ago, that the lawyer had taken out to lunch a woman other than his wife. He took her address for further reference, drove her to the station, and, on behalf of the future beneficiary under the new will, refunded her out-of-pocket expenses generously.

He wrote to Lance Harrison, advising him of the situation and asking him for further instructions. But no one was more astonished than the lawyer when he found that the young man accepted the changed conditions without fight, without even argument or quibble.

Harrison wrote:

DEAR PERCY: Thank you for your information about the second will, which Miss Reay has been keeping. I note your statement that she has satisfied you as to her previous ignorance of its validity. That being so, I have nothing to discuss with her or with you, I think. I do not see any necessity for, or use in, a consultation.

I understand, from your information, that the Iron property passes from me should I remarry, but the news does not trouble me very much. Yours faithfully,

LANCE HARRISON.

"Not a kick!" said the lawyer in surprise, when he read that letter. "Not a whimper! And he's engaged and, they say, head over heels in love! But I bet I know which'll win, love or money. The young swine!"

Percy, therefore, was still more surprised to receive, the next day, a second letter, by way of afterthought, from Harrison. It ran:

DEAR PERCY: There's just one thing I forgot to ask you. My late wife made several personal gifts to me, among which I suppose I may include my horses, since they were bought from the very generous allowance which she made to me. There is also a car. I take it that such gifts are my personal property and would remain in my

possession should I remarry and forfeit the rest?

The lawyer thought a little over that second letter; yet still he could not think kindly. He said to himself:

"The fellow, of course, is an inveterate gambler."

He wrote:

DEAR MR. HARRISON: The horses, car, and anything that may remain of monies placed to your separate account by your late wife remain your own, indisputably.

For the first time since Dorice had flung him away, Lance Harrison laughed. His heart rose, buoyant and light. He was, as the lawyer surmised, a gambler, and a very happy one. He thought over many plans, and chose the most diverting. He wired to Mrs. Waymore.

Don't you think you could fly up to town for an hour or two with Dorice? I think I could now persuade her. LANCE.

The Waymores were now in Berkshire and Harrison in Jermyn Street. The rail journey was a small thing to an eager matchmaking lady. She wired back:

Coming to-morrow, dear boy. Meet us twelve-thirty.

CHAPTER XXII.

When Mrs. Waymore sent her telegram, she had not consulted Dorice. She felt very arch and artful. She had shown Harrison's wire to her husband, who had urged her:

"Go! Get Dorice there somehow, and let him have another shot."

But the lady required no such urging. She answered triumphantly:

"I have wired. We're going to-morrow."

"Does Dorice know?"

"My dear! I dread the battle with her! You know what she is! But I'm going to win."

"Don't tell her," said the father. "Pretend you're going about a dress

or something, or to meet somebody. Shove her into the car, if Harrison brings it, before she can get her second wind. The whole affair has been most absurd."

"Girls are so hard nowadays," said Mrs. Waymore.

It was evening when the mother approached Dorice on the subject. Entering her girl's bedroom while she dressed for dinner, she sat down, bright and billowy, to say:

"My darling child, I have to go to town to-morrow, and you'll go with me, won't you? It's about my little colonial property, you know. We'll just run up, lunch, and I'll talk to my man, and we'll be down again for dinner."

Dorice did not care about town, or lunch or dinner, or anything in the world; so she acquiesced.

Mrs. Waymore was always sweet to Dorice, but the next morning she was remarkably sweet. She sent for her early to her room, where she was reading her letters and taking breakfast in bed, and made many fond inquiries:

"Slept well, little girl? What are you going to wear to go to town with me?"

And Dorice said:

"Any old thing will do, won't it?"

"No, it will not!" cried Mrs. Waymore in pretended anger. "Wear your new blue serge, darling, will you? You look so sweet in it. And wear blue shoes and stockings and take a blue umbrella. Oh, and a white hat. And I shall pick you two of Lady Clinton's adorable roses. I like to see natural flowers on a young girl."

"I'm not dressing for my wedding, mother," said Dorice with a little sour laugh; and no sooner were the words spoken than she nearly cried over them.

"No, love," said her mother, casting down her eyelashes archly. "No, love, no. But we might have a very nice day, all the same. I may have some

dear little surprise for you, darling. Who knows?"

"Don't try to cheer me up, mother."

"Oh, my love!" said Mrs. Waymore.

"I know I'm grumpy," said Dorice, "and horrid. But——"

And she went out, and cried in her own room while she fetched out the blue serge and the white hat and the accessories. Her mother dispatched after her the maid whom they purported to share between them, but who, nevertheless, was invariably attached exclusively to Mrs. Waymore. This morning, however, she very carefully and beautifully dressed Dorice's hair.

When Dorice, beautiful and sleek and sad, joined her mother in the car, Mrs. Waymore looked her over and thought:

"He'll try hard, and he ought to try hard for her. My girl looks so lovely! And I'll give him every opportunity."

Dorice was quiet all the way to town, immersing herself in illustrated papers to save herself from her mother's chatter. Everything she saw seemed to hurt her, irrelevantly and inconsequently. When the sun shone, she hated it for shining; but if the clouds rained, she could have wept, too. And town was memory and torment; while the country gave too much space and leisure for thought to brood in. Her exquisite clothes hurt her, because they covered such an unhappy heart, and the illustrated papers, with their flashes of wit, were like jesters at a funeral.

Under her drooped eyelids, her mother watched her, and guessed a little, comfortably, of all this, and was stirred by vague memories of some such sensation long ago, in herself. But she thought it was all very young. She knew that, if not in one way, in another, it would pass. Years had blurred her vision and blunted her nerves.

But she had a tingle of apprehension as the train neared the terminus. He would be there, and what would Dorice

say? Or do? Mrs. Waymore alighted first, for a swift look around; and there he was, not as she had last seen him, gray under his tan, with eyes tired with their torment of sleeplessness and humiliation of tears, but strong, eager, anticipatory, with a certain daring confidence about him as he took possession of her. The Daimler was drawn up on the rank.

"She's here?" he exclaimed.

"I—I brought her," said Mrs. Waymore.

Dorice was getting out of the compartment when she saw him.

"Oh, *mother!*" she cried, in a voice of reproach and consternation.

"Dorice," said Harrison breathlessly, "please——"

Mrs. Waymore rose to the occasion; she had a wonderful dignity when it served, and she called upon it now.

"Dorice," she said, "I will not have a vulgar scene here. Kindly calm yourself. Lance, take her to the car."

"I won't go!" Dorice gasped, under her breath.

"Please, Dorice," said Harrison steadily. "I have something very important to say to you—very, very important, Dorice. You would never forgive me for not saying it, if you knew, or yourself for not listening. So please, Dorice!"

Dorice walked beside him composedly to the car, and Mrs. Waymore followed, saying to herself:

"He did it very well. He's being awfully good. It will all come right. I wonder what line he will take with her, though."

They were all three in the back of the car, Mrs. Waymore, in her wisdom, between the pair, making conversation.

"And when did you leave Yorkshire, Lance?"

"Two days after you went. Everybody cleared off, you know. Everybody was wonderfully good."

"Of course, of course, my dear boy. So you've been in Jermyn Street since?"

"Yes. And you?"

"We, as you know we intended, went on to the Clintons' in Berkshire. Delightful there, isn't it, Dorice, darling? Henry has been shooting awf'ly well and is delighted. I forget if you've met the Clintons, dear boy. If not, you will some day."

Mrs. Waymore smiled a dear little confident smile, as who should whisper secretly into his anxious ear, "When you're married."

She remarked on the settled weather, and asked why he had come to town in August.

"I have things to do," he explained. "I sent the horses to Tattersall's, you know, and I rather wanted to see them go."

"Sold the horses?" Mrs. Waymore exclaimed, arching her eyebrows, and she turned on him another dear little look, expostulatory this time. Then she nicely scolded her silent daughter.

"Dorice, you've much to answer for, you little wretch. This poor boy has gone and sold his horses just before the hunting."

"Perhaps I shan't hunt this season," said Harrison, looking far over the streets, and he saw lonely places that were not lonely any more.

"You must," Mrs. Waymore replied.

"Anyway, they sold very well."

"I never heard such a thing! Of what use is a little more money to you, dear boy?"

"Not a cuss, saving your presence, lady."

"I don't understand you," replied Mrs. Waymore, but she appeared perfectly contented and confident in her misunderstanding.

"I have a good many explanations to make, perhaps," said Harrison slowly.

Mrs. Waymore smiled secretively and enjoyably.

"You shall have every opportunity," she murmured.

Harrison was once again in his rip's mood, full of devil. He could have sung, for sheer joy at her.

"You think it will be all right?" he whispered.

"My dear boy," Mrs. Waymore murmured, most maternal, "I hope so. I may tell you, I have prayed so."

The lady sighed and settled back in her seat and looked out into nothingness with an effect intended, perhaps, to be spiritual, only that she could not purge the calculating quality from her keen eyes.

Harrison laughed, and said delightfully:

"You're a dear."

They had cut into Piccadilly by now, and Mrs. Waymore turned to her daughter, who was very pale and cold by her side.

"Dorice, my darling," said she coaxingly, "don't be angry with your poor, frightened mother. Really, now, darling! Because I am going to confess—since it is high time—that I have promised, for both of us, to lunch in Lance's rooms and hear something important that he wired me about yesterday."

"Was that wire from Mr. Harrison?" Dorice asked coldly.

"Mr. Harrison!" sighed Mrs. Waymore. "You silly, silly child! My dearest, you young girls stand willfully in the way of your own true happiness. Anyway, love, we are lunching with Lance, and you will be nice to him, won't you? Lance, dear boy, I am asking Dorice not to freeze us all up completely."

Dorice was suffering as very young women can, but she would not show it. Thus trapped, she would like to hold up her head and go icily through the business without a quiver; also

without a hint of melting under the warm love sun. To her mother, she only murmured faint acquiescence, but round that lady she dared to smile at Harrison, and her smile had all the frosty glitter of a berg from arctic seas. It menaced his projects more than her stoic repose. Yet the young man returned it so radiantly that she shrank back into her corner and looked away.

"They will never make me give way," she promised herself. And her eyes burned and her throat ached, while her young heart was heavy.

The car pulled up in Jermyn Street, and Harrison helped out first Mrs. Waymore, calm and anticipatory, then Dorice, heroic with resolve. As their hands touched, for the first time—since that midnight war, the love current ran from each to each and made that immemorial purpose leap to his eyes, while hers sank beneath it. Her own will felt suddenly small, fragile, and tired, and she feared. But she followed her mother in, outwardly unshaken.

In the sitting room, Mrs. Waymore uttered an exclamation of pleasure.

"Your flowers!" she cried. "Dear boy, how gorgeous!"

Harrison had decked his rooms like a church for a wedding. Flowers, stacked in corners, on tables and balcony, bloomed, massed and white. They gave forth their heavy, yet delicate scents like incense upon the altar of bridal. The worldly woman looked around and smiled sentimentally and sighed sentimentally. Then she looked at the unmoved girl and raised her eyebrows and shook her arch head.

"Ah, well!" she sighed. "Ah, well!"

"What, mother?" Dorice replied.

"Aren't the flowers delicious, dear?" said Mrs. Waymore, a little at a loss.

"Beautiful," said Dorice.

"All for us, Lance dear?" asked her mother.

"All for you, Mrs. Waymore," he replied, but he looked at Dorice.

"Ah, well!" said Mrs. Waymore once more. "Ah, well! Dorice, darling, I wish I were a girl again! How long before lunch, Lance?"

"Half an hour, if that will do."

"Perfectly. I only meant that, if I had time, I'd run through my letters, which I didn't open before we started this morning."

"You always read them in bed, mother," said Dorice, flushing.

"Well, love," said Mrs. Waymore, "I did not do so this morning, and I'm sure I need not be formal with Lance. Where can I write a letter, dear boy?"

Harrison opened the folding doors leading into his dining room, and indicated a desk of many pigeonholes. When he closed the doors again, Mrs. Waymore was safe and smiling on the other side, calling her thanks through the partition, saying:

"I can find *everything* here, and thanks so much. This will do *beautifully*."

Harrison turned to face Dorice at bay.

"How dare you!" said she under her breath.

Harrison advanced and looked her straight in the eyes.

"I dare everything, Dorice, where you are concerned."

"Nothing's of any use," said Dorice. "You only hurt yourself and me to no purpose."

"Are you so sure of that?"

"Absolutely sure. As sure as I was the other night."

"Does it hurt you, then, Dorice?"

Dorice was silent, until she thought of the counter-question:

"Does it hurt you?"

"Bitterly," Harrison replied.

Dorice stood silent; she had not sat down since she had entered, and it did not occur to him to ask her. They

were at the fiercest war in the world, and both stood as if to fight the better.

He pleaded: "Dorice, tell me it hurts you, too."

Dorice would not. She replied:

"I've finished with it all."

"And with me?"

"And with you."

"Wouldn't—couldn't—anything make any difference?"

"Nothing that I can think of."

"Dorice, why have you put me away from you?"

"Don't go over it all again."

"But tell me. Why?"

"I told you that night."

"Because I'd been married before?"

"Not only that."

"You thought I ought to have told you before others did?"

"You know that it wasn't only that."

"Because I married for money?"

"Yes."

"And because I offered you that money to live on?"

"Yes."

"You thought—you think—me a cad?"

"Yes."

"But, Dorice, that was the only money I had to offer you—all I had to keep my princess royally."

Dorice smiled the little wintry smile that she had given him once before. But this time it did not hurt Harrison; he was glad and proud to interpret it.

"Dorice, I was glad at the time that I had the money. How else could I have asked you to marry me?"

"You think I would marry only for money, as you did?"

"Dorice," said Harrison, coming closer, "would you marry me only for love, then?"

"I don't understand," said Dorice, trembling.

"It's all I've got to offer you," Harrison whispered, "and I offer it. Will you take it, my darling, my queen?"

"I don't understand," faltered Dorice.

"You soon shall," said Harrison. "I'll tell you. Dorice, give me your little hand to hold. Thank you, you darling. I *will* use those words to you, you see. Now I'll tell you. They've found another will, a later one, which leaves me the Iron money only on condition that I don't remarry. If I do, I'm penniless, stark. Will you marry me, Dorice? Love or money—you win the race, easy. Money's not in it. Money's not even a starter. That's what I think of money. Will you marry me, my dearest girl?"

Harrison put out his arms and caught Dorice, while she whispered:

"We shouldn't have to live on—that?"

"Heaven knows what we'll live on," said Harrison. "I don't. Will you risk it? If you will, that is love such as no man deserves. Will you?"

Dorice put up her lips like red flowers, and all the white flowers on the love altars saw the bridal kiss.

"I'll marry you," whispered Dorice.

"Thank God!" cried Harrison, and he kissed her in a frenzy till both were breathless.

"I have a confession," he said.

"Another?" asked Dorice, on his breast.

"It's the dearest little one, and if only you'll like it as much as I do——"

He pulled from his pocket an envelope, and therefrom a folded paper. "Sit down, darling, and let me show you." He kneeled by her, and she remembered. "This is rather like the first time of all—if you haven't forgotten——"

"I could never forget," said the lover, and once again he turned his head where it leaned against her shoulder and kissed her above her heart.

"Now show me," said Dorice, "what the paper is."

He spread it on her knee.

"Have you ever seen one before?" he murmured. "It allows us to get married this very afternoon."

Dorice went red and white. Then she laughed, and the tears filled her eyes.

"Your mother has brought you up to your wedding, darling," said the young man, his eyes wide upon her face.

"Oh—could we?" breathed Dorice. "But we couldn't!"

"Tell me why not, if you can."

"I can't."

"Then we'll be married to-day, shall we, only girl?"

"It's perfectly awful," trembled Dorice, laughing.

"Tell me why."

"I can't."

The young man smiled.

"It shall be perfectly beautiful," he vowed.

Dorice looked with awe at the magic on her knee.

"But," said she, "Lance, you're poor. This costs money."

"My horses and my car, dear girl, provide us with a wedding and a honeymoon."

"My trousseau's all ready! What more?"

"So we'll go honeymooning. And after that, who knows?"

"Or cares?"

"I do," said Harrison. "I must look after you, you precious thing."

"We must tell mother."

"Dare you?"

"Dare you?"

"I dare."

The lady came at that moment, slowly turning the handle of the folding door and billowing gracefully in, one meager letter in her hand as the result of her correspondence. She came prepared to see without looking, and to take notes without ostentation, and to say anything or nothing. But she saw with immense gratification, as she faced a triumphant young man and

a star-struck girl, that it might be anything. She began ecstatically:

"My dears!"

"It's all right," said Harrison.

"Thank you a thousand times, mummy," said Dorice, "for bringing me to town."

"Oh, my dears," exclaimed Mrs. Waymore, "you make me very happy! And lunch is coming in."

Dorice continued, regardless of the lunch news:

"Everything has turned out delightfully, mother. The only obstacle has been entirely removed. If Lance remarries, he loses every penny of—that money. So—so— Tell her, Lance."

"So we're getting married this very afternoon."

"Indeed—you're—not!" said Mrs. Waymore very slowly.

Harrison smiled:

"Your kind prayers have been directly answered."

Dorice said, with a shining smile:

"No one can prevent me now, mother."

And Mrs. Waymore, pale and startled, waking up to the consequences, cried:

"I shall telephone your father to come immediately."

"We shall be married long before he can get here, mother."

"But in spite of the haste that Dorice indicates, do let me give you lunch now, dear lady. There's at least time for that."

"How dare you?" said Mrs. Waymore, turning upon him. "How dare you mock me? If what my daughter says is true, your marriage is impossible. And if you had been a little more frank with me yesterday, I would not have dreamed of bringing her here. As it is, in my husband's absence, I must insist on knowing the exact state of your financial affairs. I hope I am mistaken when I say that it all sounds extremely shady——"

"I can count on about one thousand pounds, Mrs. Waymore."

"A year?"

"My dear lady! What magnificent notions! All told—one thousand pounds."

"If you imagine," said Mrs. Waymore, with a steely look, "that you are making a second marriage like your first, which might recoup you partly for your loss, you are utterly mistaken. Dorice has not a farthing of her own."

"Mother," her daughter cried, "I am utterly ashamed of you!"

"And I of you!" said Mrs. Waymore, turning now upon her. "These precipitate ideas of marriage are really indecent."

"Lunch is served, sir," said Harrison's servant.

"Dorice," said Mrs. Waymore, "I order you to come away instantly."

The young people looked at her compassionately.

"If," said Mrs. Waymore to Harrison, "I could prevail upon my daughter to come away, I would not remain here another moment, but as it is——"

As it was, the lady had recourse to her usual relief—tears. And they led her into the dining room, and, one on either side of her, plied her with lunch. There was champagne. And they laughed all the time. Never had the world gone round so charmingly.

But Mrs. Waymore's appeals could

move neither of them. They were inexorable in their demand for their lives. At two-thirty the Daimler waited below, and the mother was invited to attend her daughter's wedding. She came, crying. She sat in the car crying while they disappeared from her into a strange, unfashionable church, at which it seemed all arrangements had been made without consulting the bride's mother at all. She received them with tears when they came out again, bound in wedlock, quiet with a new and wonderful reverence, forever and ever each other's.

"We'll drive you to the station, mother," said Mrs. Lance Harrison, "and you'll give my love to father and Lady Clinton, and tell them I'm sorry to rush away like this, please? And you'll send my trousseau when I wire our address, won't you, duck?"

"I shouldn't like my daughter to be without a frock to her back," sobbed Mrs. Waymore.

They drove her to the station, waited on the platform till her train drew out, looked at each other shyly. There was no more chaperonage for them. The world had left them alone.

They returned to the car, settled in; the door shut as if upon everything not of this moment; the engine purred softly like a pleased cat; and their journey began.

"Now!" said Harrison.

THE END.



CRABWISE, science goes backward to discover what is ahead.

GETTING into the public eye frequently puts a man out of sight.



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

By

ALAN DALE

THE fractious lady who revels in the intense happiness of extreme misery is always the most popular heroine of the modern stage, and the more misunderstood she can make herself, the more she is appreciated. To be perfectly candid, there is no limit to her mental gyrations and her serene enjoyment thereof. Fortunately, there is inevitably a last act, in which she can take poison or die in some nice and unostentatiously dramatic manner. But it is a case of "The fractious lady is dead! Long live the fractious lady!"

This heroine, when married, is acutely in love with some other woman's husband; in fact, we are led to the belief that she married merely in deference to that condition of mind. When unmarried, she is lured to her ruin, because it is the happily miserable thing to do. In each case, she talks a great deal about herself, analyzes her state, and steadily refuses all logical amelioration thereof. Sometimes she is miserable because, she says, she is merely a "doll"—the silly little thing!—and at other times, as in Mr. Galsworthy's "Fugitive," she is miserable because she is just her husband's "woman." Nobody could possibly imagine what she would really like to be. Of course it must be horrid for a wife to be her husband's "woman," but I should think it would be worse if she were his "lady."

All these argumentative married heroines disdain the simple, yet most medicinal possibility of children. That is their last consideration. It is also the playwright's last consideration. The modern playwright looks upon children as a sort of affliction. They are only for the unmarried heroines, just to make them a bit more miserable. The heroine of "The Fugitive" has been married for ages and never even dreams of a child. The unmarried heroine of "Lilac Time" goes wrong and immediately becomes a mother, so that she can wave baby clothes at the passing regiment and cry "*Vive la France!*" with "emotion choking her utterance."

It is really quite baffling. Children are a sort of disease that attacks the unmarried heroine and from which the married heroine is gorgeously immune—by reason of her marriage. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the really emancipated woman who does not want children gets married to avoid having them.

You may say that I exaggerate, but I assure you that it is not so. The very best playwrights, dealing with the fractious lady, are very careful to see that she has no children. Children would solve her problem; they would prevent her happy misery; they would be her safety valve and her salvation. Not for her! Her sister who goes astray, and

cannot marry, has the children. The fractious lady who is married, and who has in addition a lover or so, is strangely and almost aggressively childless.

This is one of the curiosities of the drama, which holds the mirror up to nature and—incidentally—holds up the theatergoer to the ticket speculator. I think it is rather humorous, and I refer you to dozens of popular plays, that you may perceive my point. "The Fugitive," which is Galsworthy's, and therefore extremely serious and awe-inspiring to critics, owns the most fractious brand of fractious heroine. Rarely have I encountered one so sublimely miserable and so determined to continue so until the very last act. She hates her dear husband, for reasons that cannot, apparently, be analyzed. He makes her blood run cold, and she dreads all their reconciliations, which she likens—in her artless, girlish way—to those of "animals."

They all tell her that she is "too fine," and I suppose she must be. Naturally, she agrees with them. She is abominably "fine," and is quite unable to endure anything except her own introspection. She sits around the room and mopes; she stands in stained-glass attitudes and mopes; she does nothing all day long, finds it dull, and mopes; always she mopes! But she is so "fine," and her sensibilities are so keen!

Then she breaks away from it all and goes to the home of the man who loves her, Malise. (I think it should have been *Malaise*). She is so "fine" that she will not accept anything for nothing from him, and therefore declines to stay in his home platonically. She goes into a shop to earn a living, but again she is "too fine." It is dreadful drudgery, and the stage lady always complains about that. It is only the men who are the unchampioned drudges in this world.

In due course, she returns to Malise,

whom she has grown to love—presumably because he is not her husband—and stays in his house as happily miserable as ever. In real life, such a woman would have a few bright moments, free from arguing about her own sensations, but not on the stage! Even when the fractious lady gets what she has always been angling for, she is just as miserable. And she is so "fine" that she mopes!

Mr. Galsworthy, anxious to make a play of it all, then gets busy. The dreadful husband—really an awfully nice chap, and so harmless!—sues her for divorce and aims at revenge. He determines to ruin her betrayer, instead of sympathizing with the poor fellow, compelled to live with such a disagreeable woman. Malise is "literary." He either writes because he is poor or is poor because he writes. I incline to the latter view. He appears to be a "journalist." The fractious lady insists upon living with such impossible people!

Even Galsworthy is not above that joyous dramatic subterfuge known as renunciation. He arranges that delicacy in this way: The husband will cease to hound the impecunious lover and will settle a sum of money upon the heroine if she will leave Malise. And if she doesn't leave Malise, he will be ruined. So there you are! She sits down and writes a note, just as Camille and all her freckled sisters love to do, and then she goes out—out—into the night, and all that sort of thing, don't you know.

After which, six months elapse, and you are glad that they elapse between the acts. You can go out and smoke while the fractious lady is hurling herself at her doom, serene in the conviction that she will not escape it—and also that you won't. In the last act of all, she is "elegantly gowned" as a courtesan. There she sits, at a questionable restaurant, just as "fine" as ever and even more happily miserable. Men

seem to cluster around her, though why they should be attracted toward such a sartorial kill-joy, I cannot imagine. It is a very joyous restaurant, on "Derby Day," but it looks lugubriously respectable compared with some of ours that wot nothing of Derby Days.

You realize that she will die soon—there is a silver lining to every cloud—because she seems abnormally pleased. On the stage, when they take their own lives, they love it, and cannot conceal that fact. It is what they have been waiting for. It is the *bonne bouche*, as it were. She has just about surrendered to some "attentive" man when she recoils, as she sits there in her "elegance." While he is absent for a few minutes, she produces from her pocket a bottle, drops its contents into a glass of water, and immediately dies. And she does it beautifully, too—just as Hedda Gabler advised Eilert Lovborg to do it.

"Who is she?" asks a waiter.

And the answer is: "A lady." Had she lived, she would probably have been a woman. Death made of her a lady. The pity of it!

Such is "The Fugitive," a study of a heroine as fractious as one could desire. Critics spoke of her with bated breath and noted her quite as "fine" as she wished to be noted. What a muddle! Personally, she interested me in precisely the same way as lunatics interest me. I adore a spasm or two of lunacy occasionally, as relief from the dire monotony of sanity, but I do like to realize that it *is* lunacy. Otherwise it would have no charm.

If playwrights would only admit that, while children may be sordid and inelegant, they really are the main object of marriage! Why should we be asked to sympathize with people who look upon marriage as mere amusement, which it surely isn't? The heroine of "The Fugitive," with a child or two, would have ceased to worry about her

own sensations. All her introspective troubles would have vanished. Or she could have adopted a child. Of course that would have done away with "The Fugitive," but I cannot think that the loss would have been irreparable. Ibsen's Nora, who had children, was worth arguing about—at least, that angle of the discussion was properly covered—but these heroines who insist upon selfish misery, just for its own sake, amuse me.

Women are always pictured as being so "restless"—and the pictures are invariably painted by men. Feminine playwrights are much more consistent. I should like to see one of these fractious ladies discussed by a humorous woman, like Miss Clare Kummer, for instance. Once upon a time, Sarah Bernhardt was told that the public had grown tired of her speckled heroines and longed for something a trifle respectable.

"Well," said Sarah, "for my next character, I will select a *perfectly* good woman—one who adores her husband and has only *one* lover. That will be so original!"

Miss Emily Stevens gave a capital impersonation of "The Fugitive's" heroine. She seemed to understand the unbalanced trend of the lady and to emphasize it. Even her "mannerisms" helped. Miss Stevens has adopted the quaint and eccentric behavior of Mrs. Fiske, and that fitted this rôle in "The Fugitive." She bites her lips, distorts her mouth, gives shrill little india-rubber cries that sound like the plaints of a talking machine, and when you particularly want to understand what she says, she becomes indistinct and you lose it. Miss Stevens is young and much better than pretty, and as you see her, you think of fractious problems. She is the personification of the woman who wouldn't be happy if she could, and couldn't if she would. I admire the intellectuality of her work.

She appears to *think* her rôles, rather than act them, and when I miss some of her words, I forgive her. Language is not always necessary. I think I preferred Nazimova in Russian, with which I have not even a bowing acquaintance, to English, with which I have been brought up. Miss Stevens appeals to the imagination, and that is really the prime function of dramatic art.

Edward Emery played her husband as a sort of "grouch." This conception was probably as good as any other. The lady would have hated him had he been the most amiable creature on earth. As the Virginia judge would say, she "had lost her taste for him." Conway Tearle, an extremely interesting young man, was the lover, lacking, perhaps, in poetry, but quite duly emphatic. One need not criticize the manners of men pitted against women of this type. They simply do not matter.

Mr. W. Somerset Maugham's play, "Our Betters," which was seen at the Hudson Theater, was so full of fractious ladies—and to add insult to injury, they were all pictured as American—that it was spoken of as a "terrible arraignment." So there now! It was also called very "bitter." Fortunately, when you are both terrible and bitter, you are invariably "brilliant," and that much-abused adjective was not excluded from comments on "Our Betters."

Once upon a time, such a play as "Our Betters" would have evoked most indignant discussion. People with the courage born of illiteracy would have "written to the papers" about it, and the box office would have reaped a rich harvest. We have outgrown that sort of ingenuous behavior. Nobody writes to the papers about the theater, except to complain that they cannot buy their tickets at their advertised price—and soon they will tire of that melodious plaint.

Mr. Maugham's apparent object was to portray American women who have married titles as very scandalous persons. There were three of them in the "comedy." One, a Chicago-born duchess, actually paid all the bills of a pernicious young bounder, to whom she was violently attached. "If I married him," said she, "I should lose my hold upon him"—which would have been terrifying. Like the conventional fractious lady, she was extremely cynical and even epigrammatic. Another was a New York-born "lady." She had a lover, who ruled her home and who was accepted in that rôle by her entire circle of disreputable friends. During the play she was detected in clandestine conference—to put it neatly—with the duchess' pet, and Billingsgate was let loose. It was all very pretty and alluring. The third was a Boston-born princess, programmed as *Principessa Della Cercola*, and she was just sold to her husband by matchmaking parents. Apparently she had no "affairs," but was separated from her husband and merely pleasantly wretched.

Mr. Maugham dealt with other expatriates in the same way, and in "Our Betters" there was a good deal about certain men who affected foreign airs and prided themselves upon the fact that they had no trace of "American accent." On the whole, it was rather a bitter blow aimed at one of our pet topics. Although we profess to despise those who marry abroad and scatter paternal ducats around European hearths, we are really—or so it would seem—a trifle proud of them. They are trotted forth pictorially in the Sunday papers, and long lists of American titled ones are perpetually flaunted in our faces. We cannot escape them. The inference is that they must appeal to some morbid streak in our natures.

But for an Englishman, Mr. W. Somerset Maugham, to set them forth as irrevocably fractious ladies was surely

audacious. Of course, they were not precisely in the same class as the heroine of "The Fugitive," because they were quite satisfied. They were happy without being miserable, which gave them no claim to be "studied." If only Mr. Maugham had made them talk like penitent Magdalens, or had induced them to philosophize, I feel certain that they would have been considered quite favorably. The genuinely fractious lady must not settle down comfortably to her fractiousness. She must be uncomfortable, and—more important still—she must make every one else uncomfortable. That is absolutely essential to a true portrait of the fractious lady who is petted by students of the stage.

Nothing of the sort occurred in "Our

Betters," and the play proved to be exasperatingly lacking in point. The pictures of the expatriates resembled daubs. One indignant youth called the play "rancid," and perhaps it was. Personally, I would just as soon listen to the fractious lady emitting epigrams and sparkling brilliantly as to her philosophy and her feverishly restless viewpoints. Also, she might just as plausibly be happily happy as miserably happy. "Our Betters" was interesting for the sake of its cast, which gave us Rose Coghlan, at her best; Chrystal Herne; Leonore Harris; Fritz Williams; and Ronald Squire.

The fractious heroine has certainly been busy, but she will reappear anon as fresh and chatty as ever. Impossible to lose her.



SONG

SINGER, sing upon thy lute,
Sing our very life away.
Player, play upon thy flute
Till the darkness groweth gray.

Some must hate and few may love;
Singer, sing them both away.
Which is eagle, which is dove,
Player, do not stop to say.

Singer, unto morrow sing;
Player, for a nighttime play.
Life, where is thy boasted sting?
Where thy victory, O Day?

Singer, sing our life for song,
Let it haply pass for gay.
All the world is right and wrong.
Player, play the world away.

S. L.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

IN this number you have the beginning of the Countess Barcynska's brilliant new novel, "Love Maggy." Those of you who have read "If Wishes Were Horses," "The Honey Pot," and "The Little Mother Who Sits at Home," will need no urging to read the latest story from this gifted author's pen. We plan to print it in as long installments as possible, so that the objections to serial publication will be minimized.

Followers of May Edginton's absorbing novels need have no apprehensions because of the temporary omission of her work from AINSLEE'S. The author of "He That Is Without Sin" and "The Man Who Broke the Rule" already has a new story well under way for us. "Love Maggy," we like to think, would not have felt quite at home in any magazine other than AINSLEE'S, and we know you will agree with us, when you have become thoroughly acquainted with her, that Maggy should have everything she wants.

ELIZABETH NEWPORT HEPBURN'S story in this issue would seem to indicate that the finer instincts of the cultured, highly civilized man appeal more strongly to modern woman than does that simple directness inherited by some men from our bone-crunching, eat-'em-alive ancestors. But don't jump at conclusions before you have read Albert Payson Terhune's novelette in the July number, "Cave Man Stuff." Bearing in mind both stories, we are led to the startling conclusion that, while some men appeal more to certain women, other men appeal more to uncertain women.

Incidentally, back of the highly entertaining love story in "Cave Man Stuff," there is a wonderful picture of the effect of the mushroom growth of the munitions industry upon the life in a certain type of American city.

For the sake of variety, we seldom print two contributions by the same author in one number. But Mr. Terhune, judging from the amazing versatility of his output, is many authors in one body, and we shall not omit the next article in his "Men of Mystery" series because of his novelette. For July he has written of the mystery of the death of Marshal Ney, who, history tells us, was executed by a firing squad in the Luxemburg park at dawn on December 7, 1815. Mr. Terhune proves, however, to our satisfaction at least, that history is wrong. Marshal Ney, for years known as Peter Stuart Ney, a rum-loving Scotch schoolmaster, died more or less peacefully in his bed at the house of Osborn G. Foard, in Rowan County, North Carolina, November 15, 1846. His story is one of the most interesting of the series.

WE have often wished that we could obtain for our readers a short story by E. Temple Thurston possessing the delicate charm and appeal of "The City of Beautiful Nonsense," "The Greatest Wish in the World," and his other delightful novels. We have such a story for July. "Over the Hills" is its title.

Other contributors of fiction to the next AINSLEE'S include Herman Whitaker, Achmed Abdullah, and Vale Downie.

Why Some Foods Explode in the Stomach

By WILLIAM ELDRIDGE

THE combinations of food that most people eat three times a day inflict nothing less than a crime against their health and are the direct cause of 90% of all sickness."

This is the rather startling statement of Eugene Christian, the famous New York Food Scientist, whose wonderful system of corrective eating is receiving so much eager attention throughout the Nation at the present time.

According to Eugene Christian we eat without any thought of the relation which one food has to another when eaten at the same time. The result is that often we combine two foods each of great value in itself but which when combined in the stomach literally explode, liberating toxics which are absorbed by the blood and form the root of nearly all sickness, the first indications of which are acidity, fermentation, gas, constipation, and many other sympathetic ills leading to most serious consequences.

According to Christian, all of this can be avoided if we would only pay a little attention to the selection of our daily menus instead of eating without any regard for the consequences.

This does not mean that it is necessary to eat foods we don't like; instead Christian prescribes meals which are twice as delicious as those to which we are accustomed. Neither does he suggest proprietary or patented foods—he simply tells us which foods when eaten together produce health and energy by removing the cause of sickness.

Not long ago I was fortunate enough to be present when Eugene Christian was relating some of his experiences with corrective eating to a group of men interested in dietetics, and I was literally amazed at what he accomplished with food alone and without drugs or medicines of any kind.

One case which sticks in my mind was that of a mother and daughter who went to him for treatment. The mother was forty pounds overweight and her physician diagnosed her case as Bright's Disease. She had a sluggish liver, low blood pressure and lacked vitality. The daughter had an extreme case of stomach acidity and intestinal fermentation, was extremely nervous, had chronic constipation, and was 30 pounds underweight.

Christian prescribed the proper food combinations for each. Within a few weeks all symptoms had disappeared, and within three months the mother had lost 33 pounds and the daughter had gained 26 pounds, and both were in perfect health—normal in every particular.

Another case which interested me greatly was that of a young man whose efficiency had been practically wrecked through stomach acidity, fermentation and constipation resulting in physical sluggishness which was naturally reflected in his ability to use his mind. He was twenty pounds underweight when he first went to see Christian and was so nervous he couldn't sleep. Stomach and intestinal gases were so severe that they caused irregular heart action and often fits of great mental depression. As Christian describes it he was not 50% efficient either mentally or physically. Yet in a few days, by following Dr. Christian's suggestions as to food, his constipation had completely gone, although he had formerly been in the habit of taking large daily doses of a strong cathartic. In five weeks every abnormal symptom had disappeared—his weight having increased 6 pounds. In addition to this he acquired a store of physical and mental energy so great in comparison with his former self as to almost belie the fact that it was the same man.

But perhaps the most interesting case that Christian told me of was that of a multi-millionaire—a man 70 years old who had been traveling with his doctor for several years in a search for health. He was extremely emaciated, had chronic constipation, lumbago and rheumatism. For over twenty years he had suffered with stomach and intestinal trouble which in reality was super-aciduous secretions in the stomach. The first menus given him were designed to remove the causes of acidity, which was accomplished in about thirty days. And after this was done he seemed to undergo a complete rejuvenation. His eyesight, hearing, taste and all of his mental faculties became keener and more alert. He had had no organic trouble—but he was starving to death from malnutrition and decomposition—all caused by the wrong selection and combination of foods. After six months' treatment this man was as well and strong as he had ever been in his life.

These instances of the efficacy of right eating I have simply chosen at random from perhaps a dozen Eugene Christian told me of, every one of which was fully as interesting and they applied to as many different ailments. Surely this man Christian is doing a great work.

I know of several instances where rich men and women have been so pleased with what he has done for them that they have sent him checks for \$500 to \$1,000 in addition to the amount of the bill when paying him.

There have been so many inquiries from all parts of the United States from people seeking the benefit of Eugene Christian's advice and whose cases he is unable to handle personally that he has written a course of little lessons which tell you exactly what to eat for health, strength and effi-

ciency. This course is published by The Corrective Eating Society of New York.

These lessons—there are 24 of them—contain actual menus for breakfast, luncheon and dinner, curative as well as corrective, covering every condition of health and sickness from infancy to old age and for all occupations, climates and seasons.

Reasons are given for every recommendation based upon actual results secured in the author's many years of practice, although technical terms have been avoided. Every point is explained so clearly that there can be no possible misunderstanding.

With these lessons at hand it is just as though you were in personal contact with the great food specialist, because every possible point is so thoroughly covered that you can scarcely think of a question which isn't answered. You can start eating the very things that will produce the increased physical and mental energy you are seeking the day you receive the lessons and you will find that you secure results with the first meal.

If you would like to examine these 24 Little Lessons in Corrective Eating simply write The Corrective Eating Society, Inc., Dept. 1246, 450 Fourth Ave., New York City. It is not necessary to enclose any money with your request. Merely ask them to send the lessons on five days' trial with the understanding that you will either return them within that time or remit \$3, the small fee asked.

The reason that the Society is willing to send the lessons on free examination without money in advance is because they want to remove every obstacle to putting this knowledge in the hands of the many interested people as soon as possible, knowing full well that a test of some of the menus in the lessons themselves are more convincing than anything that can possibly be said about them.

Please clip out and mail the following form instead of writing a letter, as this is a copy of the official blank adopted by the Society and will be honored at once

CORRECTIVE EATING SOCIETY, Inc.

Dept. 1246, 450 Fourth Avenue, New York City

You may send me a prepaid copy of Corrective Eating in 24 Lessons. I will either remail them to you within five days after receipt or send you \$3.

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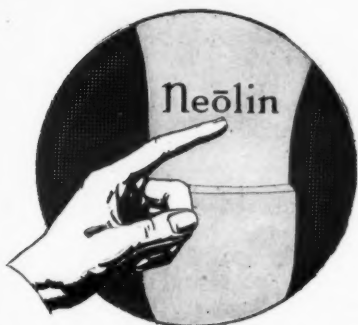
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12



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It represents the better-than-leather shoe sole whose success has brought many imitations—which do not imitate. And it is better-than-leather on many counts.

Leather quality is declining. Neolin quality is fixed and standardized.

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Leather drinks water and absorbs damp, but Neolin dry-proofs feet. It grips as invariably as leather slips.

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Neolin is the same in quality on any price of shoe. Try it for knockabout vacationing or for every-day wear.

In all sizes. In black, white, tan. To avoid the imitations *mark* that mark; stamp it on your memory: **Neolin**—

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You Can Grow Your Hair

**Old or Young
Either Sex**

Successful Scientific Treatment

Do you suffer from loss of hair?—Does your hair get prematurely gray?—Is your hair stripy, sticky or matted?—Do you suffer from dandruff, itching or eczema of the scalp?—Are you bald-headed or about to become so?

If you suffer from any of the above-mentioned hair troubles do not neglect it, but try to relieve the trouble at once. Delays are dangerous. Write at once for our illustrated booklet,

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(By an Eminent European Specialist.)

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UNION LABORATORY

171 6th ST., UNION, N. Y.

Please find enclosed 10 cents to help pay the distribution expenses. Kindly send me at once your Calvacura No. 1 and your booklet, "The Triumph of Science Over Baldness."
(Enclose this coupon in your letter.)

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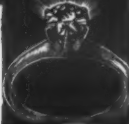
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City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron to Make Beautiful, Healthy Women and Strong, Vigorous Men

NOW BEING USED BY OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE ANNUALLY

Quickly transforms the flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anaemic men and women into a perfect glow of health and beauty—Often increases the strength of delicate, nervous, run-down folks 100 per cent in two weeks' time.

IT is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, says: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron."

Pallor means anaemia.

Anaemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degenerated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste-pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked are responsible for another grave iron loss.

Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt.

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical institutions says: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders."

"If people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or run-down, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was notwithstanding



F. King, M.D.



E. Sauer, M.D.

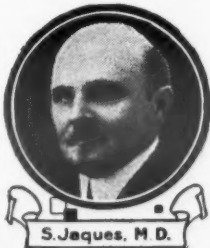
his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in—now at 50, after taking nuxated iron a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth.

Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly-looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron.

If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time, simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the arena; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results, and those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

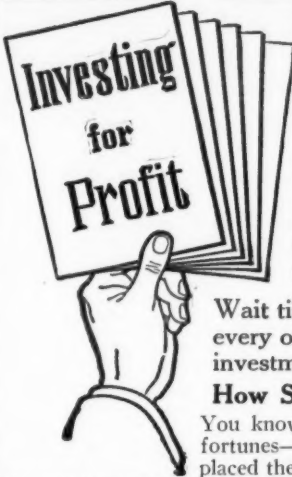
NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit \$100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 100 per cent, or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.



S. Jaques, M.D.

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You know and I know that small investors have made large fortunes—men who, guided by judgment and courage, have placed their funds direct into creative enterprises at their inception and thus reaped **full benefit** of the earning power of money. Today opportunity on bended knee is entreating the small investor to accept her favors—and those who heed the insistent call are achieving fortunes.

My magazine explains the rules by which small investors have made wise and profitable investments—how \$100 grows into \$2,200—the actual possibility of intelligent investment.

Learn the REAL EARNING POWER of Your Money

The real earning power of your money is not the paltry 3% to 5% paid by banks or by corporations that have their future **behind** instead of in **front** of them. "Investing for Profit" reveals the enormous profits financiers make and shows how one can make the same profit—it demonstrates the **real** earning power of your money—the knowledge that financiers hide from the masses—it explains **HOW** small investors are making big fortunes and **WHY** they are made.

This and other valuable financial information is yours—it is free six months for the asking.

How to Determine the Value of Different Investments

There are thousands of salaried people today who have a small sum laid aside or who can invest a small amount each month—but who realize that they do not know how to determine the value of the different classes of investments that are offered to them daily. This condition has created a demand for a publication or institution whose express object is to help direct and guide the small investor. "Investing for Profit" is the result of a pressing need, and should be worth tens—perhaps thousands of dollars to you.

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"Investing for Profit" is for the man who intends to invest any money, however small, or who can save \$5 or more per month—but who has not yet learned the art of investing for profit. Read what Russell Sage, one of the most successful financiers of his day, said in regard to investments:

"There is a common fallacy that, while for legal advice we go to lawyers, and for medical advice we go to physicians, and for the construction of a great work to engineers—financing is everybody's business. As a matter of fact, it is the most profound and complicated of them all."

Don't invest a dollar in anything anywhere until you have at least read 1 copy of my really wonderful magazine.

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El Rado is no trouble at all to use. Saturate a piece of absorbent cotton with this sanitary lotion and apply to the hair, which dissolves in a few moments. Then you merely wash it off—the safest, most “womanly” way to remove hair from the face, neck or arms.

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and freight prepaid on a new 1917 “RANGER” bicycle. Write at once for our big catalog and special offers. Take your choice from 44 styles, colors and sizes in the famous “RANGER” line. Marvelous improvements. Extraordinary values in our 1917 price offers. You cannot afford to buy without getting our latest propositions and factory-to-Dealer prices.

Be a “Rider Agent” and make big money taking orders for bicycles and supplies. Get our liberal terms on a sample to introduce the new “RANGER.”

Tires, equipment, sundries and everything in the bicycle line at half usual prices. Write today. A postcard will do.

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“Can take a pound a day off a patient, or put it on. Other systems may temporarily alleviate, but this is sure and permanent.”—N. Y. Herald-Examiner, 7-8-12.

Sun, Aug., 1891. Send for lecture: “Great Subject of Fat.” No Dieting. No Hard Work.

DR. JOHN WILSON GIBBS' TREATMENT FOR THE PERMANENT REDUCTION OF OBESITY

Harmless and Positive. No Failure. Your reduction is assured—reduce to stay. One month's treatment \$5.00. Mail or office, 1370 Broadway, New York. A PERMANENT REDUCTION GUARANTEED.

“Is positive and permanent.”—N. Y. Herald-Examiner, 7-8-12. “On Obesity, Dr. Gibbs is the recognized authority.”—N. Y. World, July 7, 1900.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of AINSLEE'S, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1917:

State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is one of the publishers of AINSLEE'S, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publishers, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; editor, Robert R. Whiting, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; managing editors, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; business managers, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Ainslee Magazine Company, Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York, N. Y., a corporation, composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: C. C. Vernam, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

GEORGE C. SMITH,

of the firm of Street & Smith, publisher.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of March, 1917, Charles W. Ostertag, Notary Public, No. 51, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1919.)

Various Headaches

"It is necessary in order to treat headaches properly to understand the causes which produce the affection," says Dr. J. W. Ray of Blocton, Alabama. Continuing, he says: "Physicians cannot even begin the treatment of a disease without knowing what causes give rise to it, and we must remember that headache is to be treated according to the same rule. We must not only be particular to give a remedy intended to counteract the cause which produces the headache, but we must also give a remedy to relieve the pain until the cause of the trouble has been removed. To answer this purpose Anti-kamnia Tablets will be found a most convenient and satisfactory remedy. One tablet every one to three hours gives comfort and rest in most severe cases of headache, neuralgia and particularly the headaches of women.

FOR SICK-HEADACHE

If a patient is subject to regular attacks of sick-headache, he should take two A-K Tablets when he feels the least sign of an oncoming attack. These tablets are prompt in action, and can be depended upon to produce relief in a very few minutes. Such patients should always be instructed to keep their bowels open.

Influenza or LaGrippe

It is quite refreshing these days to read of a clearly defined treatment for Influenza or La Grippe. In an article in the "Lancet-Clinic," Dr. James Bell of New York City, says he is convinced that too much medication is both unnecessary and injurious.

When called to a case of La Grippe, the patient is usually seen when the fever is present, as the chill which occasionally ushers in the disease has generally passed away. Dr. Bell then orders that the bowels be opened freely with salts, citrate of magnesia or other laxative. For the high fever, severe headache, pain and general soreness, one Anti-kamnia Tablet every two hours is quickly followed by complete relief.

A Remedy for Pain

"The efficiency of any drug," says Dr. C. P. Robbins, "is known to us by the results we obtain from its use. One of the principal symptoms of all diseases is pain, and this is what the patient most often applies to us for, i. e., something to relieve his pain. If we can arrest this promptly, the patient is most liable to trust in us for the other remedies which will effect a permanent cure. One remedy which I have used largely in my practice is Anti-kamnia Tablets. Many and varied are their uses. I have put them to the test on many occasions, and have never been disappointed. I found them especially valuable for headaches of malarial origin, where quinine was being taken. They appear to prevent the bad after-effects of the quinine. Anti-kamnia Tablets are also excellent for the headaches from improper digestion; also for headaches of a neuralgic origin, and especially for women subject to pains at certain times. One or two Anti-kamnia Tablets every two or three hours give prompt relief."

Acute Rheumatism

In the hands of one observer we find that a certain drug has been used with the utmost satisfaction; others have found the same remedy to be a great disappointment. All physicians however agree that every method of treatment is aided by the administration of some remedy to relieve the pain and quiet the nervous system, and Dr. W. S. Schultz expresses the opinion of thousands of practitioners when he says that Anti-kamnia Tablets should be given preference over all other remedies for relief of the pain in all forms of rheumatism. They are also unsurpassed for headaches, neuralgia and all pain.

Indigestion-Dyspepsia

Are you distressed after eating? Do you have nausea when riding in the cars, or on the train or boat? Take one A-K Tablet and get relief.

When to Take Anti-Kamnia Tablets

As a Pain Reliever—In headache, migraine, coryza, la grippe and its after-effects.

As an Anodyne or Sedative—In indigestion, gastralgia, dyspepsia, hysteria, insomnia, car-sickness, sea-sickness, worry and sight-seer's fatigue.

As an Antipyretic—In intermittent, puerperal and malarial fevers, bronchitis, pleurisy, etc.

As an Anti-Neuralgia—In acute or chronic neuralgia, facial neuralgia, earache, toothache and pains of sciatica.

As an Anti-Rheumatic—For the pain in acute or chronic rheumatism and gout.

All genuine Anti-kamnia Tablets bear the AK monogram. At all druggists in any quantity or in 10c and 25c packages. Ask for A-K Tablets and insist on getting them.



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MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

IS PUBLISHED *COMPLETE* IN THE JUNE

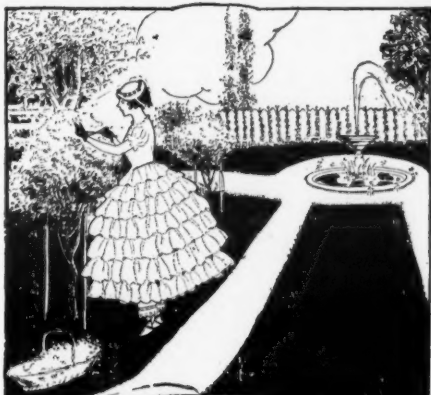
Metropolitan

Other features in the June
Metropolitan

Theodore Roosevelt on "Doing Your Bit." Sir Oliver Lodge on Spiritualism. William Hard, England at War. Adventures and Letters of Richard Harding Davis. Congress as seen by Art Young. The Indian Drum by Edwin Balmer and William MacHarg. Books, People and Things by Clarence Day. Pictures in Rotary Gravure. Six color cover design by Haskell Coffin.

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Fat put on by indoor life is unhealthy, and if nature is not assisted in throwing it off a serious case of obesity may result.

When you feel that you are getting too stout take the matter in hand at once. Don't wait until your figure has become a joke and your health ruined through carrying around a burden of unsightly and unhealthy fat.

Spend some time daily in the open air; breathe deeply, and get from any druggist a small box of oil of korein capsules; take one after each meal and one before retiring at night. Also follow the simple directions that come with the box.

A testing supply of oil of korein capsules, with interesting book, will be mailed free (in plain envelope) if you write to Korein Company, 168A Arcade, East 28th Street, New York, N. Y.

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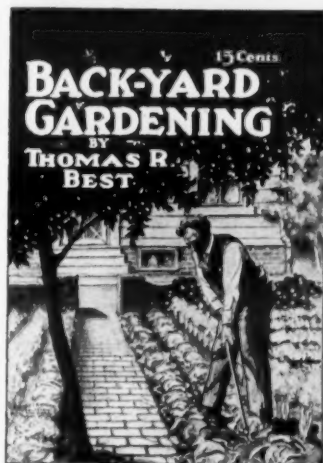
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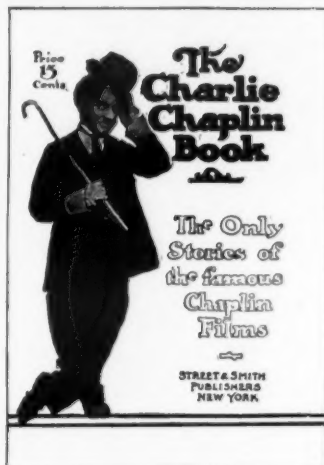
By Thomas R. Best, has been published to help avoid another shortage in the vegetable crop. It tells what can be done with a small plot of ground; how to lay it out and plant; what to plant early and how to secure a succession of crops—and thus get double service from the same ground in one season.

Price, Fifteen Cents

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NO need of asking: "Charlie who?" Everybody knows that just "Charlie," is Charlie Chaplin.

There has been lots of trash published about this funniest of all comedians, but the Charlie Chaplin Book (authorized and copyrighted) is the only one which deals with Mr. Chaplin's best work. It contains all of the side-splitting comedies in which this artist has appeared for the Essanay Company, in interesting, well-written story form.

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STREET & SMITH, Publishers
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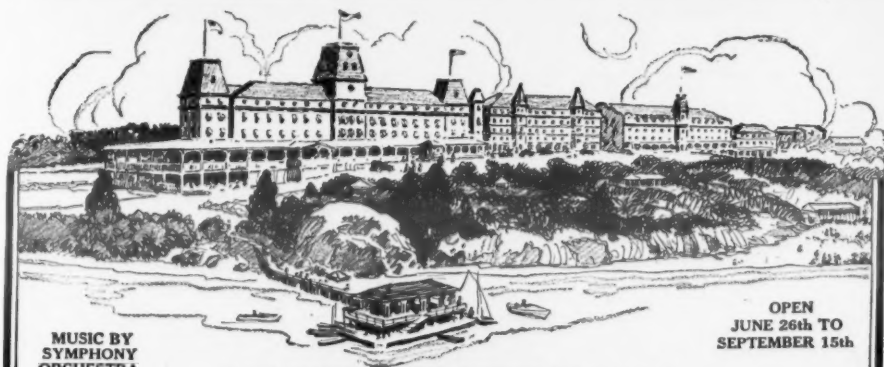
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